

83/85

c

Regional Oral History Office

**THE BANCROFT LIBRARY**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

G. PAUL BISHOP

A PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER'S VIEW  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, 1947 TO 1981

*The Bancroft Library*

University of California • Berkeley











Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

G. Paul Bishop

A PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER'S VIEW  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, 1947 TO 1981

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1981



All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between the Regents of the University of California and G. Paul Bishop dated June 3, 1981. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley. No part of the manuscript may be quoted without the written permission of the Director of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the Regional Oral History Office, Room 486 Library, and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of the passages, and identification of the user.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

G. Paul Bishop, "A Portrait Photographer's View of the University of California, Berkeley, 1947-1981," an oral history conducted in 1981 by Suzanne Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1983.



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

The project to interview portrait photographer G. Paul Bishop received its impetus at the time of "an exhibition of [Bishop's] photographs portraying 112 men and women of distinction who have been associated with the University of California at Berkeley from 1947 to 1981." That exhibition, held in the Heller Gallery of the University's Student Union from April 6 to May 2 of 1981, was the first indicator of a wave of enthusiastic reviewing and interviewing of G. Paul Bishop.

G. Paul Bishop continues to be the portrait photographer of choice in Berkeley. His studio on Durant should be given landmark status. His enthusiasm for his university and his delight in serving it through his photography and his ever-generous gifts of original prints to The Bancroft Library carry over into his participation in the oral history.

The interviews were held in the Bishop home and studio, an hour each meeting the afternoons of May 7, 14, 21, 28, and June 3, 1981. The manuscript has been left in its draft form, with a detailed table of contents serving also as an index. After deletions of false starts and irrelevancies, the interviewer sent the interviews to Mr. Bishop. His slight additions, corrections, and changes are in black pen, regrettably sometimes difficult to distinguish from the interviewer's.

A number of articles about Bishop have been appended with two listings of G. Paul Bishop portraits in The Bancroft Library's portrait collection.

Thanks for sponsoring this interview go to James R. K. Kantor, the University's archivist, a friend cognizant of the importance of Bishop's work and of the importance of the oral history office's work.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

Suzanne B. Riess  
Interviewer

14 January 1983  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley





# G PAUL BISHOP TABLE OF CONTENTS / INDEX

## INTERVIEW HISTORY, by Suzanne Riess

### BEGINNINGS

The 1950s, Becoming Known	1
Ansel Adams, Barry Evans, Howard Cook, Andy Lawson, R.G. Sproul	
Admiration Could Mean Trouble: Dean Acheson	9
Chester Bowles	
Frank Lloyd Wright	15
Robert Gordon Sproul, and His Help	17
Agnes Robb, James Conant, Monroe Deutsch, Chester Nimitz, J.F. Neylan	
Comments on Doing Work on Speculation	22
Robert Gordon Sproul	25
Herbert Bolton, Imogen Cunningham,	

### ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CAMERA 30

Theodora Kroeber, and Comments on Camera Format	30
Edward Weston	
Advantages of Working with a Tripod	37
Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Dorothea Lange, Edward Weston	
"The Tight Head" What Does it Reveal?	47
Chiura Obata	

### VERBAL PORTRAITS 54

Paul Taylor and Dorothea Lange	54
Brett Weston, William Garnett	
Imogen Cunningham	60
Edward Weston	
Paul and Dorothea	64
Edward Weston	
Ursula and Woodbridge Bingham	66
Patsy Bishop	
Darius Milhaud	70
Yusef Karsh	
Herschel Chipp	72
Fred Cousins	
The Hands Tell the Story	76
Aldous Huxley, Edward Weston	
Margaret Dhaemers and Bill Garnett	80
Frank Freeman, Dr. Takahashi, Berkeley Camera Club	
Charles Hitch	86/87
Dean Johnson	

(continued)

Mary and Harold Jones	89
The Anthropology Portraits: William Bascom	93
Betty Connors, David Mandelbaum	
Czeslaw Milosz, and the Matter of Credits	96
Chiura Obata, the Mylar Negative and the Value of Prints	99
Cedric Wright	
The Medical Center Portraits: Areas of Intimidation	108
Francis Sooy, Philip Lee	
The Profile and the Ego	111
Edwin Rosinski, Egon Brunswik, Luis Alvarez, Melvin Calvin	
D.W. MacKinnon, who Brought in Aldous Huxley	117
Admiral Nimitz	
Katherine Towle: Women of a Certain Age	121
"Smile'," Alex Sheriffs, and Charles Derleth	123
Katherine Towle	
August Vollmer	129
Eugen Neuhaus	133
Harry Kingman	
Max Marshall: Back to the Beginnings	135
Pre-visualization: A New Wife and Home	141
George Boschetto	
Monroe Deutsch, John Francis Neylan, Joel Hildebrand,	
Andy Lawson, George Adams, David Barrows, Alva Davis,	
Stephen Pepper, Benjamin Lehman, James Hart, Jacob Geiger	148

#### APPENDICES

- Appendix A, "G. Paul Bishop, Portraits of Men," Cal Monthly, November 1950.
- Appendix B, "It all started 44 years ago with a \$1 Brownie," Independent Gazette, May 1979.
- Appendix C, "Fine Portraits from the Kitchen," Darkroom Photography, March/April 1979.
- Appendix D, G. Paul Bishop portraits in University Archives, and G. Paul Bishop portraits in the Bingham Collection.
- Appendix E, "U.C. Portraits by G. Paul Bishop," Heller Gallery, 1981.
- Appendix F, "An Eye for an I," Portraits by G. Paul Bishop, Cal Monthly, October 1981.



Regional Oral History Office

The Bancroft Library  
University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

I, g. Paul Bishop, do hereby give to The Bancroft  
*name*  
Library for such scholarly and educational uses as the Director of The Bancroft  
Library shall determine the following tape-recorded interview(s) recorded with  
me on May 7, 14, 21, 28, and June 3, 1981 for The Bancroft Library as  
*date(s)*  
an unrestricted gift and transfer to the University of California legal title  
and all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does not preclude  
any use which I may want to make of the information in the recordings myself.

This agreement may be revised or amended by mutual consent of the parties  
undersigned.

X   
*Signature*


g. Paul Bishop

2125 Durant Avenue

Berkeley, CA 94704

*Name & address of interviewee*

X June 3, 1981 (SBR)  
*Date*

  
Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

Aug 29, 1981  
*Date*

Subject of Interview(s) photography, portraits

Approved as to Form, 24 August 1976



INTERVIEW #1 WITH G. PAUL BISHOP

Date of Interview: 7 May 1981

Interviewer: Suzanne Riess

Transcriber: Marilyn White

1 tape, 2 sides

[begin tape 1, side A]

## BEGINNINGS

### The 1950s, Becoming Known

Riess: ~~Let me start out by asking a question that made me curious.~~ Why ~~do~~  
~~was so much happening in~~ the early 1950s? ~~It's as if your~~  
 university portraits mostly date from ~~that time.~~ Did you have  
~~a connection then with the university that?~~

Bishop: ~~Yes, you're quite right.~~ <sup>then</sup> There was a stimulation and it's kind  
 of an interesting one. I guess you're aware I teach photography  
 in Extension?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: This question keeps coming up. The students say, "How do you  
 that  
 get started?" and all/sort of thing. Well, that was part of it.  
 We had started here, ~~again,~~ at a time when I suppose--people  
 think we're in kind of bad times now, but I'm sure postwar time  
 economically was ~~-(chuckles)~~

~~Riess: Pretty bad.~~

~~Bishop:~~ a rather bad time to start a studio. Aside from that, I had  
 a complete change of the type of work that I had done before  
 the war, and I was just starting over all new again.

So, getting back to what you say to the students, I have  
 never believed that the answer is to go out and, as they say,  
 beat the bushes and put "come on" advertisements on people's





Bishop: windshields and things like that. I've never advertised in all the thirty-six years that I've been here, and I really don't believe it's the best way, nor do I think it's necessary.

So what is left? In those early days we were raising our children and everything, and we were struggling pretty hard, and we were going broke. That is when ~~the Stiles Hall~~ the new gym went in for the men's gym, and the old Stiles Hall was torn down, and the new Stiles Hall--they were trying to raise money for that.

Well, Bill Davis at the time came by, as he did to all of the shops on Shattuck and, I guess, wherever in Berkeley, and asked me for donations for Stiles. We were so broke that it wasn't meaningful anyway, but I had been on campus and I had spent time in the old Stiles Hall and believed in it, so I offered to make my contribution in photography, which was very helpful to them because they were putting out a brochure and a lot of the leaders of the academic community were to be in this. It was sort of a testimonial to the goodness of Stiles Hall. [chuckles] You know, Harry Kingman was running it in those days.

So what I thought was going to be a minor thing turned into a very major thing. I hadn't made any real gesture towards the campus. I was just sitting here waiting for something to happen.

[chuckles]

Riess: For that brochure were you doing portraits?

Bishop: Yes. That's what <sup>it was all about</sup> ~~was the reason~~ and I just did portraits, and some of the very early ones like, ~~oh,~~ Clint Evans ~~and--~~ ~~oh, dear.~~ [pauses to try to remember names] ~~There were,~~ a lot



Bishop: of them that were in that group. ~~We can go back it's a matter of record and look those names up.~~

~~no 9~~ I did a lot of those and among them was President [Robert Gordon] Sproul. It was my first encounter with him. We had a very interesting conversation here. (We'll have to get back to President Sproul some way along the way because there are a lot of good things to say, but .

~~Riess:~~ ~~We could stick with that as long as~~ .

~~Bishop:~~ I'd still like to get back to answer your question because I think it's important.) But

~~Riess:~~ Okay.

~~Bishop Spraul~~ ~~and I hit it off~~ he ~~was not~~ very well and he started really chewing me out because I had seen fit to give up dentistry and he couldn't understand that. He was not a patron of the arts, so to speak, at least as far as--well, do you remember the old architecture building?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: It was falling apart. Anything that had to do with humanities in general, he kind of--somehow the budget always got put into scientific buildings and that. [chuckles] Not to say I'm sure, <sup>that</sup> he would consider himself a patron of the arts, but he thought they were pretty unimportant.

Just like a father, he just really took me under his wing and was going to do his best to get me back to finish my last year of dental school, which I was equally determined I wasn't going to do. But we became pretty good friends.

~~no 9~~ My point of all this, and why it ties in with these youngsters I teach now ~~it wasn't going out~~; it was kind of putting the giving ahead of the receiving. I believe in this as a philosophy,

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

Bishop: I really do. I just kind of gave of what I <sup>had</sup> ~~have~~. Well, you know, the old cliché, I guess, of throwing your bread on the water. But I don't think it's the worst thing in the world, and I think some of these youngsters would<sup>^</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>(down)</sup> if they could just grasp that instead of turning it the other way around!

~~[chuckles]~~

But that was the beginning of that, and it really pertains to your answer. It started me in a group like that and then, as so often happens, even when I did my poet series, one leads to another and another and another. Little snowballs start rolling up <sup>in these</sup> ~~to me with~~ little different directions; you're never sure where at any given time. But what it is is one person sees what you've done for a friend or something like that.

Riess: Did you ~~do~~ exhibiting ~~early at all~~ in that period?

Bishop: Yes. ~~[pauses]~~ I'm unsure of the chronology of it, but that is, of course, a matter of record. One of the earliest exhibits, somewhere in the early '50s probably, would have been at Mills College. I had a one-man show there which was a good one.

~~Riess: It's such a diverse list of people from the '50s, you know, with (Clint) Kidner in economics, I think Benjamin Lehman, Sproul, you say Clint Evans, George P. Adams, Charles Berleth, Jr. Now, these are people who wandered into your [studio]?~~

~~Bishop: Well, now, I'm (not really finished.) Etcheverry was definitely one that came on his own, and there's a mixture there in those names.~~



Bishop:

But getting back to Stiles Hall, I no  
 What happened from the Stiles Hall thing--and I think  
 that's kind of important in answer to your question now--  
~~a bigger question than you thought~~ [chuckles] I no  
 sooner got through with the Stiles Hall thing than the  
California Monthly, which was <sup>in a</sup> ~~the~~ little booklet form then--  
 there was an editor then, Verne Stadtman, and a real production  
 manager, Howard Cook. I think it was Howard Cook who kind of  
 hung around Stiles a lot and he saw that. He came down one day  
 and asked if I would be interested in doing a year's (which  
 would be ten issues) covers for the Monthly, which was 1950.  
 They had a very limited budget. ~~You know,~~ everybody's got a  
 limited budget! [laughter] But they paid expenses and a little  
 bit better than that. <sup>Incidentally,</sup> I had nothing to do <sup>with</sup> ~~but~~ select <sup>ing</sup> ~~the ones,~~ <sup>those;</sup>  
~~and~~ that's where Derleth and Cross and a lot of those <sup>came in.</sup> ~~you just~~  
~~were selected that ran ten months and selected for that.~~

Then you say, or as I say to the students, I guess, "How  
 did business generate from this?" What they did that was very  
 nice, ~~they did a very fine article, which I think it has changed~~  
~~and~~ <sup>for me</sup> ~~but they came~~ <sup>step 1 was</sup> ~~that was~~  
~~out with~~ a big sketch, <sup>they</sup> wrote an article about my work <sup>which</sup>  
 was accurate at the time and, ~~you know, that went to how many~~  
~~placed it before~~ readers? ~~It would be just exactly the people that~~ <sup>I say I don't</sup>  
~~advertise,~~ <sup>and wanted to know about my work,</sup> ~~I honestly don't, in the sense of advertising, but~~  
 I'm very aware that that was probably the best advertising I  
 could get. ~~They'd send it to cultured~~ <sup>[circulation].</sup> Now  
 they claim ninety thousand, I don't think it was that big then.







Riess: You're saying that you instantly became G. Paul Bishop," University Photographer; almost as ~~if~~ Karsh is photographer to corporation heads. Or was there something else on the scene?

Bishop: Let's think of [a] better one than Karsh--as Ansel is to Yosemite Valley.

Riess: All right. [laughter]

Bishop: I will accept that one. I would say that the University has been very, very good to me. Ansel became--I don't know that I should compare myself--we're good friends, <sup>but</sup> he is indeed, , and very deserving, probably the most famous photographer that we have now. But, pretty much, Yosemite Valley did it for him.

Riess: Yes. But I'm also saying that you became the obvious choice then.

Bishop: I guess that's accurate, yes. I'm sure that three-quarters of my business comes from the campus now, and faculty. Very few students. There was another photographer on the other side of the campus, on North Gate.

Riess: Barry Evans.

Bishop: Yes. Barry Evans. <sup>what</sup> We had very different viewpoints of a portrait should be anyway but, be that as it may, ~~unfortunately~~ Barry **slanted all his** ~~slided on [to]~~ efforts toward the students ~~which, on the~~ surface, looked like good business. I mean, they were very susceptible ~~to~~ <sup>--</sup> he had a very competent receptionist ~~who~~ sold and sold and sold, and his packages would pile up on the shelves, which will break a photographer very quickly. Wedding photographers do that. They over sell and never deliver.

Riess: You mean never do the work?

—  
—  
m m m m

Bishop: ~~Oh, they do the work but then these people who, in the height of their enthusiasm, / / youngsters getting married or going to school or, you know, their enthusiasm is encouraged very easily, and it looked good because there were <sup>really</sup> big orders, / But if they get second thoughts, as the wedding people do a lot, or if students write back to home and say, "Hey, I need a little extra money."~~  
~~Barry went broke because of lots and lots of business and very little ~~net~~. I guess the way you say it is lots of gross and almost~~  
~~a net. The thing that happened there, you see, he risked and did~~  
~~a product that he made very <sup>glamorous portraits</sup> pretty pictures.~~

Riess: Yes, much more glamorous than I associate with ~~you~~.

Bishop: Yes, right. I don't mean to be unkind about him but there is a big difference. Maybe I put too much character for some people's taste, but Barry very definitely wiped it out,

~~Riess: Yes.~~

~~Bishop:~~ <sup>[product]</sup> And left a very bland and uncontroversial and kind of meaningless, if I conclude my little quip. <sup>9</sup> At the same time I was sticking with faculty. . . Some of those people are pretty hard nuts to crack in the sense of I don't try to sell, I try to let people buy what they want. But I guess, in a sense, you try to make something kind of irresistible so it's hard for them not to buy, / If you want to call <sup>that</sup> it selling. The one thing that stands out through all these years of dealing with the faculty, and since I've become a member I don't know that I agree with them, they always felt they were the most underpaid people in the world. They'd come in and even though our prices in the beginning were quite low they would--  
 "oh, gee, how could they afford this?" But they were thinking people and I think that can have a difference. The uninitiated

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bishop: or the unthinking ones are much more easy to sell things to. I kind of don't like the word sell, but, I guess it's real.

Riess: The arrangement that you had through Cal Monthly was simply to produce a portrait that they could use. As far as what business developed, that was --

Bishop: That was all on my own.

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: Getting old Andy Lawson, ~~the way you talked about him~~. Andy, I'm sure he was well paid, but he was a little bit tight in the pockets, I guess.

Riess: He's a Scotsman isn't he? ~~[laughter]~~

Bishop: [laughter] So am I. His answer to it was to go over and get a hold of Howard <sup>Look.</sup> ~~hooking~~. He had Howard give him twenty-four issues of <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ magazine--his picture was on the cover--after he had come down and sampled how much it might cost him. In those days, if you look back now, it was giving them away.

Riess: How much was it, would you say, in the fifties?

Bishop: Oh dear, I don't know. I suppose it would have been something like five or six dollars for a finished portrait. That was so typical of Andy.

~~Riess:~~ ~~[laughter]~~

~~Bishop:~~ Nevertheless, look what I gained. That picture of Andy, especially the close-up head <sup>is</sup> ~~in~~ one in a million.

~~Riess:~~ ~~It really is.~~

~~Bishop:~~ I'm so far ahead. But in the early days it was a struggle, goodness ~~knows~~. ~~sakes~~. That's kind of the irony of it all. If all the nice things that have been happening to me in the last ten years had happened



Bishop: fifteen or twenty years ago when you were really struggling !  
Then you pass a point and the tide goes the other way.

Riess: ~~Ok, you might have been spoiled.~~

Bishop: ~~I'm sure.~~

Riess: ~~Now~~, when you had these people who I'm sure were obviously people of great importance then--it's certainly a record of ~~illuminaries~~ luminaries--had you developed your patter, as it were, your techniques, or did you develop it with them?

Bishop: [laughter] Oh, dear, I don't know if I like that word patter or not. I'll put it in different words. I certainly developed it with them. You know, we had discussed are there any little anecdotes with some of these people, and certainly there were some that--I hadn't developed techniques very well in those days. I was terrified of some of them.

Riess: Think of one.

Bishop: Admiration Couled Mean Trouble. Dean Acheson  
I can tell you one that's so outstanding that it's really

delightful. Of course, because of the magnitude of the man.

The more the magnitude, or the more that I admired them in the early days, the more trouble I was in. The way I like to say it is my technique is simply to talk people to death, ~~instead of ...~~

The sitting to be of any good has got to be a minimum of an hour and it's apt to run two hours. ~~It's~~ Just what we're doing, ~~is~~ yacking back and forth. I never know what it's going to be about. It's

probably not going to be about their principal field unless I just happen to be better than normally acquainted with their field.





Bishop: I wouldn't dare talk to Robert Frost about all his many poems because <sup>I</sup> knew some and others I knew nothing about. You get into pretty awkward situations.

To get back to this one <sup>in</sup> point, as I said President Sproul took a real interest and when people like **Conant** or some of those came as his personal guests, he would have me come up and photograph them. He at that time lived on campus in **what we** **call now** University Hall. Another one of those was Dean **Acheson** ~~Atchison~~, although Dean **Acheson** ~~Atchison~~'s case was slightly different because Chester Bowles -- I ran into Chester Bowles because he had a book published by UC Press. For years I've done what they call some of their more difficult ~~paper work~~ people for UC Press. (I don't know whether that should be quoted or not.) Through the years I've had quite a number of those.

Riess: For the jackets.

Bishop: Chester Bowles is another one that had been done by Karsh and he was very unhappy with it. So they sent him down here. Bowles looked more like we would think of a football coach. He had this tremendous jaw, very, very strong type, rugged face. I don't know what Karsh did. I never saw the picture but whatever he did it made Bowles pretty upset about it. In mine I think I was just lucky. I got a real good picture. I guess he appreciated that because he sent me two other people. I can get into the other one later, but he went back to Washington and had told Dean Atchison that he should have this guy in Berkeley do his picture when he came out here. (I think it was for a Charter Day, if I'm not mistaken. So I guess **Acheson** ~~Atchison~~ mentioned it to Sproul and he had



Miss Robb

Bishop: ~~Mr. Spence~~ get me over there.

Getting back to the original thing of how terrifying it can be, here I am to do the Secretary of State. Well, by that time I had put my time in the navy reserve and I had retired as a commander. I had started out twenty years before <sup>as an ensign.</sup> Well, I went through the West Gate and they stopped me there because they weren't letting people through the gate. Then when they found out that I was going out to ~~Michigan~~ <sup>Achison</sup> they had me take all these bags out of the car and they went through all my equipment. ~~They~~ <sup>Then</sup> you go up the little road and you get to what is the entrance of University Hall, and they stopped me and made another search. All this time I was protesting that I had a complete background clearance and all of this stuff, and showed them my credentials in the navy. It wasn't getting me anywhere because that was FBI and this was Secret Service, and apparently the two don't communicate. So, I'm a little bit annoyed and a great deal in awe of this by the time I get there. <sup>9</sup> Well, I go marching up with these heavy cases of equipment up to the front door, and this maid comes to the door and opens the door. Not asking anything, just seeing this equipment--"You've got to go around to the tradesmens' entrance." Oh boy, I was a nervous wreck already. I did battle with her and pushed my way past her--not literally, but I did get by her--and went in the front door. I'm sure I wouldn't have gone in the back door.

So, I'm in the presence of the great man and, you know, I really had a great deal of respect for a man who was Secretary of State of the United States. The sitting started out. I was to



Bishop:

~~Acheson~~  
do him and Mrs. ~~Acheson~~ both. She was a very sweet and lovely lady. Quite reserved. He was the one that I was worried about.

Q I was very self-conscious and things weren't progressing too well. He must have been a person that practiced in front of a mirror a great deal, because he had a persona image that was almost impenetrable. This is what I was getting and I wanted something better than that. I'm always trying to break down that persona image in everybody, which gets you in trouble of course. I honestly don't know at any given time <sup>what I am going to talk about,</sup> I remember some of the conversations as they came out <sup>uh</sup> but I never have planned to go into this thing with any patter, to use your word, planned in advance. Which is a good thing to point out because some of the great photographers do research on people and everything, and plan this patter.

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: Mine, as I said before we started the tape was this thing--I call it intuitional--~~but~~ <sup>That happens on the spot.</sup> it's a very quick thing ~~in advance~~. I really don't want to get too heavily involved. But somebody like ~~Acheson~~ <sup>Acheson L</sup> ~~Acheson~~ you already know a lot about.

So here I am, chattering away. How we got on to the subject of the navy I don't know. I would guess it was because I told him the trouble I'd had getting through all the security. So, we started talking navy, and it turned out that he had been in World War I, had gone in as an enlisted man--~~it took him~~ <sup>was in</sup> the entire war--and he came out as an Ensign, which is the lowest rank of commissioned officers. I, of course, had come out as a ~~Commander~~.



Bishop: ¶ Well, if there is ever a caste system in this country it's got to be in the <sup>officer</sup> cadre of the navy more than anyplace else, even more than the marines, because there's more pomp and ceremony, believe it or not, in the navy than any other force, I think. The system is such that an ~~/~~nsign looks up to a ~~/~~commander just the way I as a citizen looked up to the Secretary of State. It didn't last more than five minutes, but for maybe that five minutes our roles reversed. Here was an ~~/~~nsign talking to a ~~/~~commander. He came out from behind this mask and it was just an entirely different person, <sup>It</sup> ~~that~~ got through this self-assurance and this security thing.

Riess: How interesting. So during that period was when you took the portrait.

Bishop: I took the definitive ones, yes. That's one thing, <sup>well,</sup> I had to learn ~~it~~ -- ~~/~~ somewhere along the line I'll tell you one of the horror stories of learning it -- but

~~/~~ When these seemingly adverse situations occur is the best time to <sup>photograph.</sup> ~~just~~ You have to have a double track mind because your hands have to be manipulating this camera while your mind is talking to the person and your camera is going as fast as it can go.

Riess: In that situation while you were talking and establishing your roles and your relationships, you had also gotten your equipment into a position where you were ready to take these pictures. But did he and you arrive in the room together, or had you been setting it all up ahead of time?





Bishop: I had been setting up. That's kind of a common occurrence.

Riess: I wondered. ~~When you said you were ushered into the house and there was Dean Atchison I wondered --~~

Bishop: ~~Oh, I see.~~ As a matter of fact, if memory serves me right, I did meet him first, and then he and the President and Mrs. <sup>Acheson</sup> ~~Atchison~~ left the room and I set it up. Then they came back.

Riess: Then you were able to ~~already~~ determine where you were going to seat him and all of that.

Bishop: As it turned out, yes. There was a divan right by those big bay windows which, I think, pointed to the west <sup>in their</sup> ~~and~~ large living room, I guess they call it. Then he came in by himself there and I did him first.

Kind of an interesting thing. If you look at the pictures some day, over to the side from him in the glass is something that appears to be a <sup>bee bee b-b</sup> ~~hole~~ or small bullet that hit the glass. There's a very sharply outlined ring in the glass. It wasn't a high impact projectile, but some<sup>k</sup>ind of a sharp projectile had hit it. I didn't see it at the time but it's in the picture.

~~Riess: Have you ever figured what that was all about?~~

~~Bishop: It looks like a bee might have hit it at some time. I'm sure it was there before I got there. I didn't see it until I saw the picture.~~

As the years have gone by, and I have been exposed to a lot of really bright people, that kind of a childish fear of them has kind of gotten over with. Unless it's somebody that I have really hero worshiped. Then I'm in trouble all over again.

<sup>I was</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright certainly was one of those, practically ~~battling~~ babbling ~~against~~ I guess.



Frank Lloyd Wright

Riess: ~~I don't think he brought out the best in anybody it seems like.~~

He sounds like a very difficult person, Frank Lloyd Wright. Such an ego as to leave you speechless.

Bishop: You know, that's pretty much what we talked about. I don't know how I dared, but we got to talking about his ego. It was very revealing. He quite candidly explained to me how he had set out when he was an unknown architect to develop just that. He was quite willing to admit that he ~~✓~~ believed his own--what do they call it in Hollywood--his own press release, his own myth. But he said that he had manufactured it very purposely. Certainly at that time he thoroughly believed he was the greatest architect that had walked in the world.

Riess: In the case of that man, where the persona is fully developed, isn't that what you take the picture of?

Bishop: I suppose so. I kind of like to think though that he's kind of sitting back. He was very tired and he just relaxed. I was conscious of definitely wanting his hands. I think I got just that wise old owl look about him.

--  
The thing I missed was that he had ~~a~~ <sup>^</sup> ~~I put~~ this blue rinse. Do you remember how white haired women in that period of time had this definite blue? It looked like the blueing my mother used to whiten her clothes with. He had this blue rinse in his white hair. Fortunately I did it in black and white and didn't have to deal with it. But I mentally had trouble.

~~A thing that came out of that one, again, I don't know how~~  
--  
~~who I ever dared do it. At some point, like fathers showing~~  
~~pictures of their children that they carry in their wallets, Mrs.~~

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee. The names are written in a cursive hand, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed hand. The list is organized in two columns, with names on the left and addresses on the right. The names are: John A. Smith, James B. Jones, William C. Brown, and Thomas D. White. The addresses are: 123 Main Street, New York, N.Y.; 456 Elm Street, Boston, Mass.; 789 Oak Street, Philadelphia, Pa.; and 101 Pine Street, Washington, D.C.

Bishop: <sup>Now</sup> Bishop and I when we were first married had literally, rock by rock, built this house of native stone up in the top of the Sierras. <sup>--</sup> Somehow I dared pull this little picture out of my wallet and show it to him, which is a dumb thing to do. It's like pulling snapshots out, "What do you think about this?"

Anyway, he didn't comment ~~upon~~ on the architecture of it, but he did get very excited. We became good friends right then because what he latched on to was that there were still two people in the world that would work hard enough to build a complete house out of stone. <sup>We</sup> You went out and gathered all the stone and <sup>you</sup> put one rock on top of the other and built the whole thing. He thought that was quite a marvel, ~~that~~ we were just newly married and-- ~~It~~ It was a lot of work but it was a great way to start out a marriage.

He was so sympathetic to all that. He actually gave me <sup>a drawing.</sup> ~~it~~ wasn't <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ original drawing; I'm sure these were made just for that purpose of giving ~~them~~ to people, ~~he wanted to give it to~~ <sup>It was of</sup> that needle tower that was designed for Chicago but never built, ~~about~~ about as big a needle going in the ground as there was going up. He gave me one of those drawings which he autographed, which was kind of nice.

As the afternoon wore on I kind of calmed down more.

Riess: In his case it took all of an afternoon. These are very busy people. ~~Do you get in and also of their time?~~ How do you set up the ~~length of time, there so that you're not--~~



Bishop: Well, that's kind of interesting, too.

[End tape 1, Side A]

*Robert Gordon Sproul, and His Help*

Bishop: ~~I used to believe that much more than I believe it now.~~ As I have matured in my craft, I've come to realize it's bound to be [the importance of their time to busy people] true to some degree. But I think it's greatly exaggerated. I find that when these people really want to do something they find the time.

Riess: They get over being "the busy man."

Bishop: Yes. That's happened time after time after time right here in this room. They've come in and they've protected themselves by saying, "Well, I can only give X amount of minutes." They've gotten <sup>i</sup>nterigued with the whole thing, and an hour can easily go by, or more. I really think it's a protective device. I've got a terrific story, if you want to hear it, on this one with President Sproul.

Riess: Yes, ~~Let's before the afternoon is out,~~ I'd really like to hear about President Sproul. ~~You've been starting with the story that you're telling now. Let's hear about your years with President Sproul. Then, perhaps, if we have time to talk about Theodore Krober. I will work within the limits of this tape, too.~~

~~Bishop:~~ Okay.

~~Riess:~~ About time, and President Sproul.

Bishop: All right. I had met him once. He used to have teas. I think this is all gone now, but in the early days when I was on campus the president would have teas maybe once a month to which any





Bishop: students who cared to come over could come ~~over~~ and meet the President and Mrs. Sproul.

~~Bishop: A part of that home."~~

~~Bishop:~~ <sup>no 9</sup> Yes. He had them over there in the University House. We all thought it was Sproul's house in those days. I went to a couple of those. There was no reason he should remember me from that, which he didn't. <sup>9</sup> He was, it turned out, very much wanting to see this thing of building a new Stiles Hall be a success and very appreciative of anybody who had participated, and spent a lot of time causing these other people on campus to participate.

~~Bishop: In the Stiles Hall project, right?~~

~~Bishop:~~ <sup>no 9</sup> Yes. So, that was kind of one of his pet babies.

~~To get back to the fun part of the story.~~ When it came to be his time to have his picture taken, he came down here. I met him at the door. [He] had on his just <sup>matte</sup> ~~mat~~-black suit. As black as-- <sup>An undertaker couldn't have done better.</sup> No glasses. He had Miss Robb parked out <sup>in front</sup> ~~here~~ in his car. She was driving the car for him, too. She was definitely his right-hand man through all his tenure. Right-hand woman, I guess I should say. I don't know though. Maybe I was right the first time.

~~[laughter]~~

<sup>no 9</sup> His shield and everything else. I'm sure it was pre-arranged between them. As he walked in the door, ~~probably it was~~ the very first thing he said <sup>was.</sup> "Miss Robb tells me I can only have ten minutes."

Well, ten minutes in here is really hard. You're just beginning to get around to practically sitting down. ~~the way you came in.~~

~~the way you came in.~~ The way you came in is very much the



Bishop: way I start a sitting. There's none of this rush to sit you down.

But, he impressed me that way. I was aware he wore glasses and I was a little bit shaken. As I say, I was pretty new at these things. It probably was eleven minutes or twelve minutes, here's Miss Robb at the door collecting him. I know that had to be set up. That turned out fine. That's the one that was used in the brochure for Stiles Hall.

*A Well,* I would think it was probably something about a year later than that, maybe a little less than that, that he remembered all of this. There was a big demand on him for pictures. He was a very popular president and people wanted autographed pictures. I guess they'd had some done somewhere else and they had run out. So he had Miss Robb call and they set up an appointment to have him come down again. This time, it was so different. He came with his glasses on. I had talked about the dark suit. He came with a dark grey suit, ~~dark~~ *and* glasses.

Riess: Had you talked to him about the suit, or Miss Robb?

Bishop: No, I had talked to him in the ten minutes, that it was the most formal one of the bunch.

The second sitting he didn't have Miss Robb out front. He did tell me he thought he had another appointment in about three-quarters of an hour. Which is quite a change right there. *That is where* We began talking about dentistry and that sort of thing. I told him that I knew that he and Admiral Nimitz were very good friends. So I asked his help to do a photograph of Nimitz.



Bishop: I had served under Nimitz, but quite a ways down, ~~and~~

~~Riess: Quite a ways under, right. [laughter]~~

~~Bishop:~~ I was a little timid to go tell him. I'm sure it would have worked out had I done so. Nimitz was a fine gentleman. <sup>9</sup> Sometimes fate takes a hand in helping these situations along. The very fact that I asked Sproul's help for this, and we had been talking about this dentistry thing, and all that, it kind of--the psychology was good. He was doing me a favor, I guess. It turned out, ~~and~~ I think Nimitz expressed his appreciation to Sproul that the pictures and all had turned out well. It was a complimentary sitting on my part. So that is what started this whole thing. Sproul, when anybody asked him about pictures, was recommending me. As I say, it started this chain of events.

I think the first one was James Conant came to town. Sproul had him as a house guest. I think that was the first one. He called and would I come up and photograph Conant?

Riess: This matter of complimentary sitting. ~~That's alarming to me.~~  
When were they complimentary?

Bishop: Well, whenever I invite someone myself that's complimentary. If I have <sup>a</sup>good reason, then I do. You can't do it too often.  
~~It could be alarming is right.~~

Riess: Well, Conant is Sproul's guest and Sproul proposes to Conant that--

Bishop: Oh, yes, now wait a minute. I don't know whether I should put this on tape or not, but I'm sure the University of California paid the bill on that one. It went through Sproul. All of the



Bishop: invitations up there he always paid for.

Riess: After all, here he's telling you to be a businessman and then he's treating you like an artist. [laughter]

Bishop: Like an artist is right, poor artists. I only asked two people of him. I have always felt, and if I were to do it today, ~~if~~ <sup>would like</sup> I really wanted--I can't imagine anybody around that I might, ~~but~~ Well, there is a person on campus that I ~~want~~ <sup>would like</sup> to do. What's her name? I had it on the tip of my tongue. The poet. The little lady.

~~Riess: Joan Didion. No.~~

~~Bishop: No, the old~~

~~Riess: Oh, Josephine Meyers.~~

~~Bishop:~~ <sup>Miles</sup> Yes, Josephine Meyers. I so much want to do her. We've been to the same dinner parties and we've talked about it. Something like that would be complimentary.

because

The two that I asked of Sproul were Nimitz, / I really had a desire to do him, I really loved the navy. The other one was Monroe Deutsch, who had been provost during part of Sproul's time. Deutsch was a wonderful man. I really wanted to do it.

These things have a way. It isn't the worst piece of business, if you want to look at it that way. Out of having done Nimitz--it turned out to be a disaster--but nevertheless I was commissioned to do, individually, all of the Board of Regents.

Riess: Oh.

Bishop: That worked fine until about the third one or fourth one turned out to be Nylan. Have you ever heard of him.

Riess: Oh, of course.





Bishop: Well, boy, that was disaster~~ous~~! When he heard about it he raised the roof. He had been using the picture that must have been made about the time of the San Francisco earthquake. Do you remember, they call them ~~celluloid~~ collars?

~~Riess:~~ Celluloid.

Bishop: High collar and the tie was always about half-way down. Now~~a~~- days we wear a tie high in the collar. But in those old days it would be purposely about half way, the collar sticking up-- That was Nylan's picture, <sup>which</sup> ~~he~~ admitted ~~to~~ twenty-five years ago it had been taken. Knowing photographic history pretty well I think it probably went back farther than that. "Absolutely no"! He was a very powerful man and he ~~dinged~~ the whole thing.

~~Riess:~~ You mean it came to a halt at his--

~~Bishop:~~ It came to a halt at him, yes. I've since done them en masse over at Richardson Hall, but I've never done them individually. I was so young. I was just shattered by that.

Riess: Was that Sproul's idea, that everybody would welcome this?

Bishop: ~~We did, and~~ <sup>Communists are doing work on Speculation</sup> I think he really thought that they would. If there's <sup>it's</sup> anything I've learned through the years, I don't have something for everybody. This is why I had said I go through that kind of ~~rorschach~~ blot test with my people, because I'm well aware there's a lot of people now--in those early struggling days it wasn't the case--but now, a certain number of people come not by what you do but by who you've done. Those are the ones you have to look out for because they are very apt to have no understanding of my work. ~~The one thing I don't want is~~ I don't work on speculation at all and I don't welcome disasters. If I had the time I'd much rather sit in a corner and read a book



Bishop: than do something on speculation that just maybe this will turn out all right. Which I think is another thing that young photographers make a big mistake on. But I sure got off my track there, didn't I.

Riess: So you would not encourage young photographers to do things on speculation?

Bishop: I think maybe we should define speculation. What I mean by speculation is this poor hungry photographer is going to invest his time and money. ~~If you're doing what we had discussed earlier, the Barry Evans technique where it's pretty absurd~~ ~~flatly~~ ~~for~~ Of the top of your head you'd say maybe seventy-five or eighty per cent of the people, possibly excluding Berkeley, which I think is a different type of people in general, are suckers for flattery anyway. I like to think my people would be offended by it. The baby business has done just exactly that, where telephone solicitors call up and say, "Let the photographer come in. There's no obligation to you," ~~or anything like that,~~ with the expectation you can't resist the pictures of the baby. That's speculation.

~~The poor~~ ~~Of course,~~ struggling photographers--God knows we've got a lot of them around--I think he's so much worse off. ~~That's~~ ~~the same energy~~ ~~that~~ ~~it's~~ the distinction is this thing I call the complimentary sitting; ~~is~~ not speculation. You had no intention of selling them anything. You were going to give them prints for the privilege of doing them. That's a whole other thing, really. In my experience, in one way or another, it always has been very rewarding and sometimes beyond your expectations.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were absent from the meeting.

3. The third part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting.

Riess: ~~I think I can see the distinction between what you were saying in the beginning.~~ It was worthwhile for you to ~~take~~<sup>get</sup> ~~very~~ little or no money in order to take advantage of the opportunity. But that's different from investing a lot of time and energy in something that's a gamble. You say also that it's going against ~~the~~ <sup>your</sup> philosophic grain ~~anyway.~~

Bishop: For me it certainly is. I don't know. I think I'm right about that. I certainly advise these students not to do it. For one thing, they're on ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> brink of disaster all the time anyway. It can be extremely demoralizing. I have one student who's ~~well~~ ~~I'd better not get into--~~

~~Riess:~~ No.

~~Bishop:~~ There's an awful lot of politics on the campus. Let me put it ~~this way without naming names.~~ He's a very good ~~student.~~<sup>photographer.</sup> His competence is unquestionable. He has some personality problems. He just doesn't appreciate his own values, <sup>that's</sup> ~~is~~ the problem. He has approached some pretty big names on campus and photographed them. His competence is better than the pictures came out. I will have to say that I think the faculty members were probably justified in turning it down. But he approached them <sup>in</sup> this way of, "Well, I'd like to do your picture--" <sup>not</sup> ~~is~~ quite honest. He might have let them think that he was doing it because he wanted to do them while, in fact, he was doing it hoping they ~~would buy~~ <sup>would buy</sup> it. That's a very difficult bridge to make. Supposing I just said, "Gee, my life isn't going to be complete unless I do this portrait of you," and you buy that, and then I say, "Hey, wouldn't you like to buy some of these prints?" That's shifting gears.



Bishop: It's a pretty delicate thing.

~~Riess:~~ ~~Yes, I think that's~~

~~Bishop:~~ It makes you think, "Boy, did I think you were a sucker!"  
That, in its horrible essence, is about what the speculation thing really is.

Riess: Well, it could be the end of your reputation, too.

Bishop: Yes. In ~~this~~ <sup>the</sup> case of this student of mine, it has been a disaster for him. His ego was completely damaged, and his competence really is quite good.

Riess: May I pursue Robert Gordon Sproul ~~literally~~, did you do any more portraits of him, ~~and have any more~~?

Bishop: I did him three times in his tenure. Then he sent his son in as the last thing.

Riess: How did your relationship develop over those three times?

Bishop: Just beautifully. We became very good friends. Whenever we would be at some kind of <sup>a</sup>gathering or something we'd always acknowledge each other's presence, whether it was clear across the room or whatever. ~~We didn't run into things--~~

~~me~~ If you want a little bit of anecdotal interest, ~~things~~ there're a couple of things that are kind of interesting.

~~Riess:~~ ~~Sure.~~

~~Bishop:~~ One was that I got this call from Miss Robb. Did you know her at all?

Riess: ~~No.~~ I've talked to her on the phone.

Bishop: She's a very severe, stern woman. Right is right, and wrong is wrong. [She was] just completely upset this ~~morning~~ one morning. What had happened was someone had returned a photograph the President





Bishop: had autographed for them and the photograph was fading. Oh my God.

~~Riess.~~ [laughter]

~~Bishop:~~ That's one of those horror stories, <sup>and</sup> one of the reasons I don't do color very much, because you can't guarantee it won't fade. If people put it in bright light it will fade rapidly. Black-and-whites are not supposed to fade. They're supposed to be good for something in excess of five hundred years.

Here she is. Miss Robb was a very imposing person. When she's mad she's something else! Boy, she started right in on me. He might have bought something like fifty prints from me. Her question [was], "How many more of these, Mr. Bishop, am I going to get back and have faded? And how many more are not going to send them back?"

*I said, "Miss Robb, "It can't be! I know/<sup>that</sup> I washed those."* This could happen because you used old, exhausted chemicals. But usually this means that you just didn't wash the chemistry out of the paper well enough. I'm very careful about this. I think in terms of <sup>the</sup> archival ~~to~~. It almost gets to be an ego thing. I want this monument of pictures to live after me. So I'm probably as careful as anybody, and more careful than some.

I came out with that. I just sort of blurted, "Miss Robb, something's wrong. It just can't be."

"Well, would you mind coming up to the office and take a look at these?"

Boy! I dropped everything and went up! The bottom line of this thing is it was not my photograph. It was one that had been done before I had made the pictures for him, by ~~another~~



Bishop: ~~I don't remember the name.~~ It was a local photographer that lived up on Benvenue. I don't remember his name now. He's dead and gone now anyway.

Riess: Oh dear. What a story! Was she ~~appropriately~~ contrite?

Bishop: Yes, she was then, yes. She even got the President on the phone in my presence; I didn't see him then but ~~on the~~ interconnecting phone ~~and~~ <sup>she</sup> told him they had been mistaken. It wasn't my portrait. [laughter]

She was a great lady, ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> she had a tremendous devotion to the President.

Riess: Did the President send Ida down, ~~to be~~?

Bishop: Never did her. But he sent his son. Robert Gordon Sproul Jr. ~~came down.~~ I ~~assume~~ <sup>presume</sup> he sent him. She's a great lady too.

Riess: I know ~~that~~ the Sprouls ~~often~~ feel that there haven't been any great photographs of Ida, ~~in any~~

Bishop: You know, there haven't. I don't know. It's just too bad. What's her condition now? ~~I don't know.~~

Riess: She can look very charming, but she's past her prime. I have my own idea of peoples' right to preserve some image of themselves. Certainly the ~~ninty~~ <sup>ninety</sup>-two year old could be as well photographed when she's seventy as ninety.

Bishop: One of the people that I ran into this way and I have never done much about his picture--I didn't put it in this last show. Of course, I left a lot of people out of this show. But, your own Bancroft ~~[and]~~ Professor Bolton. He was one of those on the Cal Monthly cover. By the time they got him to me he was very senile and had so gone



Bishop: into decline it was just <sup>pretty</sup> sad, because he was truly a great man. There is a point, I guess, at which I just have to agree with what you just said. There's a point where you're almost doing a disservice. Did you ever see Imogen's book After Ninety?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: Some of those faces were just beautiful. Of course, the one that stands out is old Joel Hildebrand. On the other hand/<sup>Imogen</sup> told me that-- she was somewhat older than any of the people around but--she spoke of them as "these senile old people," *many* she photographed and didn't put in the book. She was going strong--

~~Riess: She did a lovely photograph of Helen Sals that accurately showed her as she was looking twenty years later. It's all right.~~

~~Bishop:~~ Imogen was a great portraitist.

~~Riess:~~ Yes.

~~Bishop:~~ I think we've got to hear more about her. She was a really truly great person.

Riess: I'd like to hear more about her from you <sup>sometime.</sup> ~~Over the years, since~~ <sup>you did</sup> ~~help [Sproul] somebody you've done several times.~~

~~Bishop:~~ <sup>?</sup> Three times.

~~Riess: Three times, all right. So you've got time number one in the black suit, number two in the grey suit. By the third time <sup>how</sup> was he? a more active participant? More controlling?~~

Bishop: [laughter] I can remember just the main part of the conversation on the third time. I actually gave him some instruction! Which was quite a thing. He confessed that it was very painful for him to have his picture taken. And with all the speaking he did, he told me it was also very painful for him to speak <sup>to</sup> in a microphone. He just did everything he possibly could to avoid either one.



Riess: Isn't that interesting.

Bishop: I couldn't do anything for him on the microphone, but at the time I just showed him a couple little tricks in front of the camera. Mostly he was talking about snapshots, the press sort of thing. He had a way of throwing his head back and kind of leaning back. If you remember, he was a leaner, but he leaned away from you, which is absolutely the wrong thing to do with a camera. You should always, definately, not even stand straight but just slightly lean toward a camera. It changes your whole attitude in the picture. We just stood in the room and I showed him how if he would just move one foot out and just transfer his weight to the front foot, and just lean slightly forward, ~~instead of this~~ *[the microphone]* ~~thing [Bishop demonstrates Sproul's posture?]~~ He abhorred it, so much I guess he was just trying to avoid it and was doing just the opposite of what he should do.

The other thing ~~was~~ he tended to have a double chin and he had this feeling if he raised his head it would get rid of the double chin, which it actually of course would. But it also gave him, I would have to say so, kind of an arrogant look. He wasn't like that. He was a pretty nice man. Not arrogant, certainly.

~~Riess: I think it's terribly interesting, the whole idea that--~~

~~Bishop:~~ He was very appreciative of that. I never saw him again. Whether he ever practiced it, I don't know. I think he did, because he surely took it up, ~~as something--~~

Riess: Well, you say that he didn't like to speak into a microphone. Of course, what everyone hears about Sproul is that his voice was so loud that he didn't need it.

~~Bishop: [laughter] who needs it?~~





Riess: ~~Did he say anything about that?~~

Bishop: ~~No.~~

Riess: ~~Did he know that he had the--~~

Bishop: ~~He knew~~ he had a voice all right. ~~Monday, I had heard the~~  
~~exact story~~, I've heard so many stories about him and his voice, ✓  
 but this is kind of cute and I'm sure you'll all heard it. A  
 faculty wife was in Monday and she saw the pictures of Sproul in  
 my stack. We talked about his voice somehow. So she related this  
 old story.

Somebody was outside in the hall while he was telephoning  
 to Sacramento. They heard this booming voice and asked someone,  
 "Who's he talking to?" ( I well, he's talking to Sacra-  
 mento." [laughter] And the retort was, "Why doesn't he use the  
 telephone?" [laughter]

Riess: I know, ~~I know~~. I love that story. I've heard it a million times.

~~I know that story [laughter]~~

Bishop: It's so typical of him.

When did you first photograph

Riess: Well, now, do you feel up to Theodora Kroeber?

ATTITUDES TOWARD  
 THE CAMERA  
 Theodora Kroeber, and  
 Comments on Camera  
Former

Bishop: ~~Oh, yes.~~

Riess: ~~I mention her because we do have the interview with her. In~~  
~~fact, it was done by Anne Brewer.~~

Bishop: ~~Oh, good.~~

Bishop:

I started with her [Kroeber] with her first book. I've forgotten  
 now which one was her first. It might have been The Inland Whale.  
 I don't know how she came. I thought it was because I had done  
 Professor Kroeber several years before.

KPFA had had a discussion and panel years before. Somebody



Bishop: came out from a New York publishing house called Walden Books and took the recordings from that discussion, in which Kroeber was one of the people. They wanted a picture of him. That's what brought Kroeber and myself together the first time.

But that wasn't the answer. Theodora, later ~~out~~ it turned out, wasn't even aware of that picture. So I never really knew why she came. It's kind of an interesting little story and it ties in with some of my own development, too. I guess we should wait until we have more time. \*

~~Riess: I guess we will have to wait.~~

[End Tape 1, Side B]

*insert from later tape*



Bishop: I did want to say about Theodora, and Alfred Kroeber, that we ~~might have been four. But we~~ had this date that we were all three of us excited about. We made the date in the spring that that fall I was going to follow the two of them around in their old Maybeck house. One of the things about Maybeck was his huge fireplaces / <sup>that</sup> you could almost put them in--and paneled redwood all through it. I was just going to informally do the two together. It's so sad, because that's the summer that they were over in Paris when Kroeber died. So it just didn't mature.

Riess: He died in Paris? ~~I'm thinking of Harold and Mary Jones.~~

~~Bishop: Well, it was in Europe.~~

~~Riess: You're not thinking of Harold and Mary Jones?~~

Bishop: No, that's another one. ~~I guess he did. I've done both Harold and Mary Jones. But~~ I'm sure Kroeber died in Europe. I just had the feeling it was Paris.

~~Riess: Oh, that's so nice that they had thought of that. It's even worth noting.~~

Bishop: So, later--I didn't ever do her <sup>by</sup> ~~in~~ the fireplace--~~but~~ we went around the house and <sup>in</sup> different rooms. The one you're using is one of them, of my series. ~~That one's very much missing him.~~

Riess: I could imagine that ~~many women would, really, be pretty insistent~~ <sup>feel strongly about</sup> upon being photographed in their home. After a certain point it becomes a real identity.

Bishop: I think it's kind of a nice idea.

Riess: You wouldn't take issue with that.

Bishop: No. If you got them in a good mood, I wouldn't. I guess I'm basically lazy. It's so nice to do it here. Seriously, I don't do it very much but I think it's a good thing to do.



## INTERVIEW #2 WITH G. PAUL BISHOP

Date of Interview: 14 May 1981

Interviewer: Suzanne Riess

Transcriber: Nicole Bouché

1 tape, 2 sides

[Begin tape 2, side A]

Riess: ~~Theodora Kroeber today~~. Many, many thanks are forthcoming  
[Kroeber portrait donated by g. Paul Bishop]  
from the library for that portrait. That was done in 1970. You  
were telling me what the occasion was for doing that, I think,  
last time. At least, how the two of you had met.

Bishop: That's where we were.

**[1970]**

That was the third time I had done her. The first time was  
when she published her first book, The Inland Whale, a group of  
legends and that sort of thing.

~~Riess: I have it in paperback so I don't think there's a portrait.~~

~~Bishop: Probably. I had done Kroeber before. I think I put this on the  
other tape.~~

~~Riess: That's right.~~

I had supposed

~~Bishop: And I had supposed~~ she came because I had done Kroeber. In  
actuality it turned out she wasn't aware of the existence of  
that picture. So I don't know for sure how she happened to  
single me out. I very often ask people, but I didn't in her  
case.

She came at a very interesting time in my own history.  
I had started out my photography here using an 8 x 10 view  
camera with a dark cloth over your head and so on. By 1950 I  
had gone down to 5 x 7. The cost of 8 x 10 film had gone up





Bishop: so high that we had to economize. And I found it worked quite well in 5 x 7.

Riess: If you were doing an 8 x 10 portrait, how many exposures do you think you averaged?

Bishop: I would aim for six. Compared to the film cost of what I use now, that was quite a thing. In those days it was before we had strobe<sup>b</sup> very well worked out. I would use a flash bulb. In between each exposure I'd unscrew the hot flashbulb and put another one in. I used two different lights, therefore two bulbs for each one. It was really quite an expensive operation.

<sup>91</sup>  
~~Bishop~~: I don't want to get too far off of Mrs. Kroeber but, in our earlier conversation we just touched on Edward Weston and what [conversation off tape] influence he might have had. I would say here that I had so worshiped the man's work, and sat at his feet at every opportunity, that I was completely imbued--he used an 8 x 10 and therefore, in my youthful exuberance, it just had to be an 8 x 10. We'll get back to him another time. There's quite a thing there that it took me years to overcome the influences that I had gained from him and to find my own identity.

That was the inception of the 8 x 10. As time went on, in about [the] 1950s ~~when I went to the 5 x 7~~--this does pertain eventually to Theodora--it was at that time that there was a transition from 5 x 7. <sup>no 91</sup>

And <sup>here is</sup> a little interesting anecdote, ~~I'll just put it in and if you want to pick it up again later--~~ It was right as <sup>I</sup> made the change from 8 x 10 to 5 x 7 that I did that year's covers for The California Monthly. That was absolutely a minimum budget.



They didn't have any money, and I didn't have any money. So I 34  
undertook and actually did do that whole series at three  
exposures each. Those covers are all contact prints of 5 x 7,  
just the exact size of the original. Which is kind of interesting  
now, I think, but <sup>at</sup> the time it was a financial necessity. I  
was still using the flashbulbs. They just barely--well, maybe  
a little bit better than covered the actual expense out of pocket.

Riess: You have opened up a very interesting subject. Let me <sup>just</sup> nail down  
a few facts. You're talking about the format, but what about the  
kind of camera? ~~Was it the [Sing ?] camera?~~

Bishop: Yes. That's a good question from a layman. It would have  
almost <sup>gone</sup> automatically with somebody in ~~the~~ photography. It was  
pretty traditional to use the big 8 x 10 camera. Then you have  
these wooden frame backs. You could change from 8 x 10 to 5 x 7 to  
4 x 5, just by removing this back.

Riess: ~~I see. So you just changed the~~  
~~back size.~~ When you're talking about the size change you're just  
talking about the ~~back~~ **back you used.**

Bishop: Yes. Have you ever seen one of those view cameras?

Riess: Yes, I have.

Bishop: I happen to have some 8 x 10 holders over on the table over  
there.

~~Riess: Yes. And I know all about the sheet film and all of that, right.~~

~~Bishop: those big, wooden. Yes. That's what it was, those big holders.~~

So, it wasn't a change of camera; it was simply going down to these  
smaller sizes

~~Riess: So your investment in camera, then, was still the same investment  
that you had made.~~

~~Bishop: That's right.~~



Bishop:

To get to Theodora. I had thought about going into a different form of the same format, the 2 1/4 square. Just prior to that the only thing available was a Rolli<sup>e</sup>, which means Rollex<sup>i</sup> flex or Rollex<sup>i</sup> cord. That's what Imogen Cunningham was using, even then ahead of me. I was very taken with it. That was the next step. I went to 2 1/4. The film would be in a roll of twelve exposures. It opened up a lot. Along with that I got my first **strobe** which meant we didn't have that waiting period of changing flashbulbs, burned fingers.

What's important ~~in that~~ is that the first time I did Theodora was the first time I used the 2 1/4 and the new **strobes**. I had explained to her that I was a little bit apprehensive about it. It wasn't the picture we used, but we started out doing a picture where she just had a notepad <sup>in</sup> ~~and~~ her <sup>lap</sup> ~~hand~~, and she was actually writing as I was taking her picture. After it was all over--it happened to be my notepad--and so she left it. She had written all of this about ~~about~~ this ~~was~~ <sup>being</sup> Mr. Bishop's first attempt at the 2 1/4. She expressed her wondering how it would all turn out, which was kind of cute and very nice of her.

Riess:

You were changing <sup>the</sup> ~~to~~ overall dimensions. Was that a very disturbing thing, to go from rectangular ~~or~~ to square format?



Bishop: It stayed with me, maybe more than I wanted it to, for a long, long time.

The transition from the exaggerated rectangle of the 5 x 7 to the square, and learning to see the sense of a square, was indeed quite a thing. Mrs. Kroeber fit right into that.

It was a delightful first encounter. She was a lot younger than we had quite a time. ~~She was quite willing to fit into~~

Bishop: It was very disturbing, psychologically, I guess. It's a whole new way to see. We're going to get back into the influence of Weston.

36

Riess: Well, why don't you talk about that now. He keeps fighting his way up.

Bishop: He will probably keep--because I still think, with all the greatness of ~~Steichen~~ <sup>Steichen</sup> and certainly Adams, Edward is the the greatest photographer we have known yet, in the purity of his work.

Along with this, the ethic that was very pronounced by Edward, and certainly absorbed by me, was that you used that entire film area. An 8 x 10 is very easy because you could see each little corner. You could see each thing. He saw every little detail in there. The important point was that you completely filled this negative frame so/<sup>that</sup>when you made a contact print of the 8 x 10 that was it. There was no cropping, no second guessing. I had been in photography for a long time before this, a photographic officer in the navy and all that. I was certainly no beginner at it, but I did pick up that ethic





Bishop: It stayed with me, maybe more than I wanted it to, for a long, long time.

The transition from the exaggerated rectangle of the 5 x 7 to the square, and learning to see the sense of a square, was indeed quite a thing. Mrs. Kroeber fit right into that.

It was a delightful first encounter. She was a lot younger then. We had quite a time. She was quite willing to fit into the adventure with me and participated in it.

*Advantages of working with a Tripod*  
 Riess: What was the adventure? Did you feel just so much freer? Were you darting around the room, as it were?

Bishop: I didn't. That's perhaps what I should have done, but I stuck with my tripod and stayed with my conventional thing. In contrast [to] Imogen. I think ~~maybe~~ she's one of our really great, great portraitists. It was in such contrast to her.

**And** I was aware of how she worked with her small camera. She would climb up on a chair one moment. In later years she didn't quite get on the floor as much, but in early years she did. She would be all around flitting around the room. One thing about it that would be different--she was using natural light, the light that filtered into the room. That, perhaps, gave you a little more freedom. <sup>My</sup> ~~These~~ kind of lights are kind of directional. You can't really get way over to one side when the light is set for one area.

Nevertheless, I don't think that was my real reason. I was pretty intimidated. It was almost a security blanket using the tripod.



Riess: Intimidated by the subject, <sup>by</sup> or/the camera?

Bishop: Not by the subject. She and I just got along so well together. I've kind of wondered why. You're probably aware that when I first started in this studio I had a sign up, "Photographer of Men." That's a whole other kettle, but it would pertain to this. I could very easily have felt intimidated by someone like she, but I didn't.

Riess: You mean a successful woman? What is she, symbolically?

Bishop: Success, maybe, yes. But I think we ought to say matriarch. Maybe that's why I got along so well, because she didn't put on the matriarchal bit. The older women--you're getting [to] a kind of good, deep spot there. To this day there is a type of woman that rather terrifies me, the pushy, matriarchal, non-compromising--I see them coming, ~~but~~ **I want to -- squish.** She had all of the qualities that would have fit that, except she wasn't that way. I had a great respect for her husband, certainly, and for her although I didn't know her before she came in the studio. It was pretty <sup>immediate</sup> /, but that isn't unusual. My feelings about people are very immediate that way anyway.

Riess: You bring up the issue of Imogen's flexibility-- she had the luck of having a system where she used natural light. I would never have thought of it that way. You always could have done things differently, and yet you never did things differently, apparently.

Bishop: That's right. I still use a tripod, not because it's a security blanket but because there are a lot of advantages to it. Now that I'm teaching younger people, I try to encourage them to use tripods because--I don't know whether you want to go into



Bishop: that technical aspect of it.

Riess: ~~If it's technical, maybe.~~ <sup>makes for</sup> I'm just assuming that it's a more composed picture, ~~and that that's your belief about--~~

Bishop: What it really is--I have this deep-seated feeling that when you are doing a portrait, as we discussed last time and I brought up the question, or the suggestion, that Ansel [Adams] just flows all over his people and dominates them--I try so hard to be the opposite of that, bringing the people out toward the camera. I try to stay so submerged. This is where the tripod fits in.

The tripod is set up over there with the camera on it; the person over here. I use a release that's, maybe, seven feet long. Of course, if I want them to look at the camera, then I'm right behind the camera. I don't say, "Look here." A sitting runs quite a while and it's just purely conversational. They're attentive and they tend to look at you. If you're right behind the camera and they're listening to what you or they are saying, it's a one-to-one contact between us. If I'm behind the camera then the camera is picking them up, what you might call, "on camera." If I said, "Look at the camera,"--that's <sup>the</sup> little, subtle part--it has suddenly got to **be**, "Oh, God, I'm having my picture taken. I've got to look at this camera!"

With this long cable release the camera might very well be in the center of the room. I would just wander over by about where that lamp is and while I'm talking stand there. This thing is in my hand. They have simply turned that way never realizing--I don't like to use the word but--that they've been manipulated in a way. That's a nasty word but you're doing it



Bishop: because if I said, "Look that way"--believe me, these kids, you can't get it through their heads, they still do it. The minute you give a command to a person, you're directing. In portraiture, at least this kind of portraiture, you're not a director. If you were doing fashions, or illustrations, or anything like that, then, I suppose, you'd be a director. Here you're trying to get the person to give of themselves. Anything that calls their attention to the fact they're having their picture taken will just set you back.

Riess: I think that's really interesting. I'm glad you talked about that. ~~Since we're on that subject~~—As we closed last time, you gave your opinions, and you started to give them now, about how Ansel [Adams] didn't succeed as a portraitist. Sum that up again. You've talked about three styles, Imogen's, your's. Now, what was Ansel's? Did he try to do portraiture, or did he give up on it?

Bishop: Let me put it this way. Last night was this showing on Channel 9 of his life's work-- an hour's program. I would think at least a third of that program was just showing his pictures. Every one was a landscape. There wasn't one portrait included. They had Georgia O'Keefe in there in the film part of it, where they're moving around <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ talking, ~~and~~ he has done a lot of good pictures of Georgia O'Keefe, ~~but~~ but not one of them is shown in there.

Ansel started out way before my time. In fact, he started his first studio here in Berkeley. He did take a crack at portraiture and gave it up very quickly. (Dorothea Lange, at the same time, was living over here and opened a little portrait studio in San Francisco.) He very quickly went into doing commercial





Bishop: jobs to survive. He did a body of portraits which he's never put together; <sup>it's</sup> never been in a book. ~~You'd almost have to be aware of~~  
~~the way~~ <sup>one</sup> in a while one scattered one will show up in a book.  
 But he just doesn't have the one quality that, I would think, would be a number one thing for a portraitist.

Imogen did. Imogen was a feisty character. In a way, she was a director, but differently. You almost had to know Imogen to appreciate <sup>it</sup> ~~her~~. In a way--God, she'd roll in her grave, but maybe she wouldn't--she was a loud-mouthed, wise-~~acre~~ with a very critical, sharp tongue. It was yap, yap, yap all the time. The advantage of that was that even though she might have been giving directions/<sup>to</sup>a certain amount, she was making such a clackity-clack about it that people didn't associate it with themselves and get that self-consciousness. When that gal was jumping up in a chair it was a sight to behold. This completely took the peoples' minds off of themselves. It was a very good technique.

Ansel is a very serious person. Even in his writing he over-writes.

Riess: What you say is interesting. Dorothea, I know, said that she put on this invisibility. She believed that she could put that on. That was important.

Bishop: Yes. She did it quite differently, too, than Imogen. I don't think she even came close to being the portraitist that Imogen [was]. She was a journalist first.

Inside the inner circle of photography we call Ansel and his work "Wagnerian." I don't know whether that's good or bad, but I think it explains the man.



Riess: That's good and bad. [laughter]

~~Bishop: [laughter] yes.~~

~~Riess: Wagner's reputation rises and falls.~~

Bishop: ~~Right.~~ But the overpoweringness is what I'm referring to there.

Riess: Yes.

Did you ever venture out of the studio for any series of portraits?

Bishop: Oh, yes. I do that, I think, rather frequently. We've got a lot of them here that were out of the studio. There's Robert Frost that was done up in George Stewart's home. There's Aldous Huxley. That was done over in Sproul Hall.

Riess: I guess I didn't really quite mean that. I think of that as the alternative of your going to your subject.

Bishop: Oh. You meant did I try to include their natural environment as part of the picture.

Riess: Yes. ~~Or did you ever just plain go out of doors for. In other~~  
~~Less formal pictures, different format.~~  
~~words, have you ever gotten out from behind the. I know that~~  
~~you're going to be able to give me plenty of single instances.~~  
~~Let's just move through your formats and styles. Are you still~~  
~~working with 2 1/4?~~

Bishop: ~~Yes, essentially.~~ I use 35[mm] but, essentially, my old dependable is 2 1/4.

Riess: When you got to 35 that didn't mean that you got off the tripod?

Bishop: The 35 is an entirely different thing. It's a postman's holiday, I guess. I spend a lot of time in the top of the Sierras. I've got <sup>a</sup>thousand slides of mushrooms, and another thousand or so of wildflowers.

Riess: So that's where you've used it mostly rather than the studio. ~~No~~  
~~professionally.~~



Bishop: Occasionally in the studio. When I do, I use it off the tripod.

Riess: Are you still using the full frame?

Bishop: Yes. <sup>Well,</sup> ~~We~~'re going to get into another area there. This is going to go back to the Edward Weston influence, if you want me to answer that.

Riess: ~~I was interested because~~ you talked about being able to see everything of the 8 x 10. Certainly you can also still see it on the 5 x 7. Then you get down to the 2 1/4. ~~You're saying that~~ then it's harder to compose?

Bishop: It certainly isn't as easy as an 8 x 10. You have to learn what's different there is that for years, even in the 2 1/4, I carried this feeling--which certainly has to be attributed to Edward <sup>; I had my square period</sup>--that everything was composed in a square because a square was the shape of the film. That was such a heavy indoctrination on me that it would seem like heresy, or stupidity, not to use the full square, because it was there. Edward's feeling was that the frame of that negative is one of the conditions that is put on you. You construct inside of whatever this is. <sup>A</sup> It has only been in recent years that I feel that I really got my freedom back and found myself. Now it's just good technique to use the maximum amount of your film. You don't make a small image so that you can re-compose it on the ~~ground glass~~ <sup>easel</sup>--at least, you shouldn't. I've heard some very good photographic teachers tell students, "Oh, look. There's two or three pictures on the one negative," which I think is terrible. I heard it being done as an encouraging thing.



Bishop: To me that means you just didn't see it.

What I'm getting at, then, was you use the maximum area of the 2 1/4. But now, and for some time--as you'll see, there's a lot of different shapes around the room--I have found my freedom again. It's preconceived and seen beforehand. But I don't necessarily say everything has to be a square. The composition is worked out on the ground glass at the time. It may very well be a long slender rectangle or it could be almost anything. But it is a forethought, not an afterthought. That was a struggle, getting it out of my system.

Riess: I'm sure, yes. What was the effect on your photography of using more frames once you were down to roll film.

Bishop: That was great. <sup>So</sup> This recent show that I had I could see it very quickly. The older pictures that were done with the view camera and, more pointedly, the screwing in of a flashbulb and taking it out, were much stiffer, much more ~~rigid~~ <sup>rigid</sup> people. That might not be entirely because of the mechanics. I think that has to be divided between the fact that I was for a long time a pretty shy--I don't know why--but I felt in awe of so many of those people. It was <sup>a</sup>very definite handicap. The result was they looked, I think, tight. At least I see it in my more recent work. Finally they're beginning to loosen up. That's not the fault of the people. It has to be the fault of the photographer.

That was the difference, when I got to the 2 1/4 where the price of twelve exposures is about the same as the price of one 8x10.





Bishop: exposure. More to the point was this beautiful strobe that flashes at a thousandth of a second. Motion is no longer a problem. You can just let people be themselves. You can let them talk, let them sing, they can play a violin, and movement is no problem anymore.

In the beginning, thirty years ago, you actually kind of said, "Now hold it," when you saw something, which was a terrible thing to do.

Riess: Right, that little smile frozen on your face.

Bishop: Everybody did it. You were shooting at a thirtieth of a second, and any movement would show. This way, the world is yours. Consequently, you burn up a lot more film. The economics are such that each film doesn't have to count. You have this complete freedom of letting them express themselves. If the hand is moving, or no matter what, that is all technically taken care of. I think it made a tremendous difference in that way.

~~Riess: It's less of an object staring at the subject, too.~~

~~Bishop: Yes. You touched on one thing and maybe we should go back and pursue it a little more. You were talking about going out of the studio. I'm not quite sure what you were getting at. At first I thought you meant just physically moving to where they are. I had a feeling you meant something more than that.~~

Riess: ~~I didn't mean what you're doing in the Sierra. I know you do that. And I didn't mean going to peoples' homes, because I can see why you did that. In a long career I just wondered if you ever felt like making, or did make, or experiment with making a quite substantial change in the way you deal with your medium.~~



Bishop: Well, through the years I have taken a lot of pictures outside. It certainly is a beautiful light. But I've gotten so committed to this instant picture--

[End tape 2, Side A]

[Begin tape 2, Side B]

Bishop: I've gotten so committed to this taking of pictures ~~of at a~~ thousandth of a second, or so, where you just deal with people that way. You encourage them to move, talk. I put it this way--as I am very apt to tell them at the beginning of a sitting-- I use the word wiggle; I say, the more you wiggle around, the better it is. Outside you're going to drop from about a thousandth of a second to at best a little better than a hundredth of a second. At a hundredth of a second some fast movements will blur.

I haven't done very much of that sort of thing in that sense for the very good reason that the strobes are so wonderful to work with.

Riess: ~~Because you have always been a portraitist--that really is part of your name--~~ a portraitist is only so good as it is clear and accurate-?

Bishop: You'll find a lot of divergence of thought on that. In my thinking, that is very, very true. But, boy, we could find a lot of people that think that a blurry image is better [laughter]. I don't agree with them, but I suppose there is room to make an argument on that side. Some people feel that maybe more is revealed if you



Bishop: blur the whole image together, homogenize it, so to speak. Maybe.

There's no point in pursuing that.

"The Tight Head" — ~~What Does it Reveal~~

~~There's~~ one other point, though, that you might like to know my thinking on the matter. Arnold Newman is really a very great photographer. We had a show of his up here, at the museum, some years back. He is from the East and has a very different and good viewpoint of things. His feeling is that you use the surroundings, or the habitat, of the people to amplify the statement about them. He has done a lot of artists. He would make a great effort to do them in their studio. It's a feeling that, perhaps, some of their work or just their living quarters or whatever, was just a bunch of adjectives. That's a very good technique. I don't do it that way. I thought possibly that was what you might have been getting at when you said outside of the confines of the studio.

So much of my work is even close in on the head, what I would call a tight head. I believe in it. I really think that we can make just as complete and ~~bonafide~~ ~~bonified~~ a statement about the person right here in the studio as we could in their natural surrounding. I just think they're two different techniques but both of them perfectly valid.

Riess: When you did [Chiura] Obata, for instance, with his brushes?

Bishop: Well there are, certainly, those exceptions.

~~Riess: Wonderful~~

~~Bishop:~~ Obata and his brushes--you know, it would just be a shame not to do him with his brushes. He was just a normal looking Japanese



Bishop: gentleman, otherwise, ~~it~~ could be one of any-- / ~~That's~~ going to get me into deep water.

Riess: [laughter] It certainly is. ~~Anyone of us could be him.~~

Bishop: But we'll explore that [laughter]. With those brushes it just did-- I think that's the whole basis of Newman's work. Those things are certainly valid. I did do Obata in his backyard, ~~with~~ just close-up head~~s~~. Somehow, they didn't seem like him in this case.

I guess it kind of depends. I guess what I just stepped into ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> this thing of what's the definition of a portrait. It obviously has many definitions, but ~~what am I trying to--~~ what's my interpretation anyway.

In the case of Obata we've pretty well identified / ~~He's~~ not a lawyer, he's not a doctor, ~~He's~~ a painter, and he's a particular type of painter. If that is a Sherlock Holmes sort of thing-- / If we're looking at portraits to say, well, that guy's obviously ~~whatever.~~ <sup>as a</sup> Recently I had a show and a critic went to great lengths of putting down some of my best efforts. In doing this he said that I had made Robert Frost look like a farmer, and that I had made Edward Weston look like an optometrist. I've forgotten some of these others. It has puzzled me how he put these interpretations on these faces. But if, indeed, a portrait is intended to show that this man's a lawyer then, okay, we'll do like a lot of people do. Put him in his office with a lot of law books behind him.

That's fine. I'm not particularly interested in that. I know what I am interested in. I would like to think that my work shows it. What fascinates me the most, and got me started in the post-war portraiture--I came to this understanding actually out in the





Bishop: Pacific. There was a very definite point where I decided very definitely that human beings <sup>are</sup> ~~were~~ the greatest things that I ~~know~~, ~~and~~ know. Edward Weston and I had a big disagreement on that subject, but let me finish the thought first.

The intellect of man, to me, is the most fascinating thing; that I know. I guess what I try to do is understand what we're all about. In the search for understanding, what a beautiful way--this thing of almost putting these many, many people under <sup>Kind of</sup> a microscope and studying them, <sup>as</sup> a way of gaining understanding of oneself.

First came this feeling--I know full well that we have the down side of our humanity, and we <sup>had</sup> ~~have~~ a very great artist, Diane Arbus, who did a beautiful body of work on that. I know it's there, but I'm not very concerned with it. What I am concerned with, and why you see a picture of Huxley, or Frost, or Imogen, or those here--I dearly loved them for what the difference was.

I visualize it as--speaking of mentality, or the human intellect--as pretty generally, <sup>ly</sup> a big sea of fairly level heights of mentality. Then you see these beautiful blips; here's an Aldous Huxley, or <sup>a</sup> Robert Frost, or a Frank Lloyd Wright. They just come out blips out of that normal. Something about that very thing, to me, has been perhaps the most fascinating thing I know.

This has nothing to do with the anatomy of their face. The anatomy, I think, is just the challenge that I'm going to work with. What I'm really after is that little golden thread that



Bishop: connects us all. I like to think it shows up in the pictures.

That's what they're all about.

Riess: You've been talking about your great people.

Bishop: It shows more in those, maybe.

Riess: In the body of work with your great people, ~~do you have any~~  
~~disagreement with them, or~~ is it simply your choice ~~about~~ which ~~is~~  
~~will be~~ the print that you will print? ~~You don't end up showing~~  
~~your things to Frost, and Huxley, or something like that.~~

Bishop: Sometimes yes, and sometimes no. ~~The reason for that is that~~ so  
 many of those were commissioned by somebody on campus, depending  
 on what department had them there or something like that.

~~Riess:~~ And ~~the subject's gone.~~

~~Bishop:~~ Very often they were gone. That's a very big thing. It doesn't  
 necessarily pertain to our greats. <sup>9</sup> First, let me say that although  
 I spoke of the Huxleys and those, I'm still fascinated with  
 everybody that I do, for the same reason. As I said, here's this  
 beautiful blip of somebody who has gone quite a bit farther with  
 stretching their mentality. At least that's the way I see it.  
 That doesn't mean that I don't enjoy working with those of us  
 who are more normal [laughter].

To answer your question more directly, my procedure is to make  
 a body of negatives which is going to range anywhere from 24, to  
 36 to 48 exposures, depending on a number of little things. Out  
 of that, I'm only seeking maybe three pictures at the most that  
 I'm going to feel are the acceptable ones. Say that you came in  
 tomorrow as a customer. I think a good question on your part



Bishop: might be, "How many proofs am I going to see?" I would quickly answer, "It will be eight to ten," which is an honest answer. You will see eight to ten. It's almost what odds would I give it. It's almost a sure thing. I can't think of when it wouldn't be a sure thing that you would wind up choosing at least one of the three. I don't do that consciously.

Riess: You could stack it. ~~You could put seven hideous ones and three~~

Bishop: Yes, but I don't.

~~Riess: But for your own pride you wouldn't do that.~~

~~Bishop:~~ That's not too smart either. I would like to think those eight to ten are going to be good ones. I would also say that if you chose one of the others I wouldn't be terribly out of joint about it. **But**

~~Riess: But if you're looking for some golden thread, some virtu in people-- Well, you've gone through that business. There's no point in my pursuing that line because--~~

~~Bishop:~~ It very likely would turn out to be one of the two or three that we would come to agree on. I don't consider myself a salesperson, and I don't think it's a selling job. Nevertheless, it turns out that way.

Riess: How would you compare what you do to what <sup>Avedon</sup>~~Avedon~~ did in that most marvelous display--I happen to think it was marvelous--of three-quarter length portraits, where he had ~~just~~ had those people just staring at the camera?

Bishop: That's where they were all about 8 x 10s on the one wall?

Riess: Right, just a wall of them.



Bishop: **Avedon** and I see the world quite differently.

Riess: I'm just talking about that format.

Bishop: I know what you mean. His statement--to use his words--he's "dealing with the surface of people." I suppose by that he means that he is not trying to--he would probably deny that you could get down below what I presume he means by the surface, the persona. He might say that we're foolish to think we do any better than that.

I'm not really concerned very much. He kind of shows up these different anatomical idiosyncracies. In the particular panel you're talking about it was kind of interesting. You could compare the shapes of heads almost anthropologically. But I think that's what he was concerned with there. I think he was showing emotional qualities, as he did in the pictures of his father. He had a beautiful array of emotions in that panel. These heads were<sup>all</sup>, as you remember, quite, as you say, cut off pretty much at the chest level.

Riess: Three-quarter. They were the famous<sup>his</sup> dignitaries, ~~the~~ dignitaries.

Bishop: Yes. But they were not--I think his own words were correct. They were surface pictures without a conscious attempt to let this inner person--. That's delicate ground. A lot of people are going to say, "What are you talking about? You don't get inside of anybody." I feel you do. That's the whole validity of what I'm doing. If I didn't feel that I was getting into them, then I would say, yes, it would be quite necessary for me to include the law books behind them. As it is, I don't care what the man's





- Bishop: profession is. I really care <sup>what is that face saying to you</sup> about that person as a human being?"
- Riess: By the time you've taken that picture you have already established a relationship, and you feel that that person has gone beyond the persona with you.
- Bishop: Yes. I feel it's a failure if that hasn't happened.
- Riess: Since we are really in a way discussing the portraits that the University has acquired, you're saying that the early body of work--the work in the 1950s--lacks that dimension?
- Bishop: I would like to think there's some of it there. But it certainly isn't there in the magnitude it would be now. I think I kind of started out with ~~a little bit of~~ a gift in that direction but I let people intimidate me. That sure doesn't work.
- Riess: I think you're really talking about something that's incredibly ephemeral.
- Bishop: Yes, right.
- Riess: What you're talking about is something that is a popular belief, almost a romantic belief, that we are who we are and not what we do. But that takes an enormous amount of projection.
- Bishop: It does. This is getting right back to that/<sup>same</sup> thing I was saying. My ability, I think, lies primarily in this thing of causing the person <sup>to</sup> flow--it's almost like an electrical flow--flowing to and into the camera rather than flowing from the camera direction to the person. Granted that's the only thing that's really good about me. I seem to be good at <sup>causing</sup> ~~doing~~ that.
- Riess: It's just very good. There's no question about it.



VERBAL PORTRAITS  
Paul Taylor and Dorothea Lang 54

Riess: Let's get some people on the record.

Bishop: All right.

Riess: I saw that you did a portrait of Paul Taylor in 1977. ~~How did~~  
~~he come to you?~~

Bishop: How did that happen?

~~Riess:~~ Yes.

~~Bishop:~~ I'd known Paul since--oh, my goodness! I can't really remember  
It goes back to Steichen when he  
the year. ~~He~~ came out here when he first got the idea of that  
big show of his, "The Family of Man." I suppose we must be talking  
around 1950, somewhere in there. We can check the dates. I had  
known Dorothea long before that. The local group of--I don't know  
what kind of photographers to call us; ~~I guess, the~~ Ansel calls  
them the "creative photographers." --

~~Riess:~~ [laughter]

~~Bishop:~~ ~~We~~ were called together over on Euclid at Dorothea's home.  
Steichen was there. Of course, I had known him before that, in  
the navy. That's the first time that I met Paul. Actually, (it was)  
the first time I'd been in their home. It's kind of interesting.  
I'd known ~~of~~ Dorothea way back before that.

Riess: You'd known her because she had a studio in Berkeley and all of  
that?

Bishop: Well, she was one of the reigning photographers as I was starting.

Riess: Yes. But you had known her personally?

Bishop: Yes, I'll say. So much so, if I can just deviate for a minute--

Riess: Of course. Have I ever denied you a deviation [laughter]?

Bishop: No. [laughter] I really think that Imogen would be considered  
by the world to be considerably a lot more cantankerous than  
Dorothea. In my experience, Imogen and I just hit it off from the



Bishop: first time we met. Maybe it's because we respected each other's portraiture. We got along fine. Imogen, undoubtedly, was more feisty than Dorothea. In my book, Dorothea and I did not hit it off. I felt she was considerably more feisty.

This little story is kind of cute. There was a show here, in Berkeley, of Edward Weston's prints. I was invited to loan them my picture of Edward because they just wanted to show a picture of the artist, which isn't uncommon and no big thing. At the reception ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> the opening of this show, here's Dorothea. I'm kind of standing over by the picture of Edward just eavesdropping to hear what some people might say about him or it. So ~~for~~ Dorothea comes along. She was quite short and very slight, and I'm about six feet. She came up to me and we knew who each was. She said, "Why did they take your picture of Edward? Why didn't they take mine?" I was kind of young and a little bit smartalicky, I guess. I didn't mean to be flippent, because I did respect her, but I just came out and blurted out, "I guess they liked mine better than yours."

Wow! [laughter] That did not go over well at all! She rose up as high as she could reach, and looked me right in the eye and said, "You're nothing but a print maker!"

Riess: Oh, dear God!

Bishop: I have always felt that was really-- *a compliment, although* she didn't mean it as a compliment.

Riess: No.

Bishop: She meant it as a good put-down. You're not a seer. You just should be in a darkroom somewhere making prints.



Riess: How bitchy. My word.

Bishop: Well, yes. That's the right word. I'm glad you said it instead of me, but it's right. She never was a printmaker. She always hired her stuff out. I think that's quite an honor, to be a photographic printmaker. Believe me. To make fine prints is a tremendous compliment. The greatest printmaker that I know today is Edward's son, Brett Weston. I've worked in the dark-room beside him. I'm very good but I cannot make a print as fine as Brett can. Ansel's a very fine printmaker.

Riess: Well, that's interesting about Dorothea.

Bishop: It was a compliment, but she surely didn't mean it as that. Anyway, there's a Professor Bill Garnett working in environmental design as a professor of photography.

Riess: Yes, I know his work.

Bishop: He's become a pretty famous photographer. He's had three Guggenheims. His work is aerial photography. I guess you know. Well, Bill's a real nice guy.

Bill, when he first came here, had hopes of getting a photographic center established at Cal. He was new at Cal and a little bit naive. You know and I know how hard it is to pry extra monies loose from anybody at Cal to start a new venture like that. Actually, it has been done beautifully now at the University of Arizona, the idea that Bill tried to get going in here.

An interesting sidelight--I haven't seen him recently, but when I was teaching up there in architecture I saw him a lot and





Bishop: we'd go to lunch together. He would always go to the faculty club and he would always want to sit at a table where there were faculty members he didn't know. He used his lunchtime meeting faculty. If he found a table where there might be one person sitting he would always gravitate to that. Which was an interesting thing. But what I meant to get to there was that he became very fond and attached to Paul Taylor. Actually, I think they became good friends, possibly from the connection with photography.

As you probably know, Paul Taylor is in very bad health, suffering Parkinson's [disease]. In my pictures--you don't see it on that one as much--his eyes are taped open with adhesive tape, and this sort of thing. A couple of years ago Bill just called one day and asked if I would be interested in photographing Paul, that he would very much like to have me do it. I'm sure he has respect for my way of doing portraits, and he doesn't consider himself a portrait photographer. He felt the need of somebody doing something about Paul, as he put it, "before it's too late."

I went right along with him. I hadn't seen Paul for many, many years. no 9

~~Riess: How did you work with him? Did he come down here?~~

~~Bishop: No.~~ That's one of those cases where I went out and did him in his home.

Riess: ~~That's right.~~ It's right in their livingroom. ~~I remember now.~~

Bishop: ~~There's a lot.~~ You've only seen one picture there. There's a lot of pictures in that series. It was a very emotional thing.



Bishop: I particularly wanted to go to his home to do him. I talked to him a little bit at the Faculty Club beforehand. I decided definately to go to his home. He would have gladly come here, I'm sure.

I guess this is one of those beautiful love affairs. I hope I'm going to experience, in some ways, the same kind of thing. He's gotten quite elderly and Dorothea is on~~e~~ his mind constantly. It's just an on-going thing. The room that most of the pictures were taken in he called Dorothea's work room. All of her books and everything are there. As we entered that room he said, "Don't you just feel her presence here!" That could be interpreted a couple of ways. The obvious one would be that here's all/<sup>of</sup>her books, and her pictures there on the walls. You couldn't help but feel her presence in that sense. I had the distinct feeling at the time [that] he meant something quite different. I respected it and thought it was very beautiful.

One of the pictures that you haven't seen--I have a great feeling for it because, as I told you, Mrs. Bishop sits where you are, usually from one to two, <sup>o'clock</sup> and I sit over here where I am. This is my habitual corner, and that's her's. We have this thing where she reads aloud for about an hour. They have a couch about the same size, only it's a white covering. He sat in his corner, much the same as I do here. But over here [gestures] was this cushion that was obviously much whiter than all the rest and wasn't being used. He pointed out to me that this is where Dorothea sat. The picture that I, perhaps, treasure



Bishop: the most is one that shows this. There's almost a gleam or a glow to the white cushion <sup>in the photograph</sup> there because it stands out. He obviously doesn't sit there and he doesn't have anybody else sit there.

I was very touched by that. I don't put it into circulation because I ~~don't~~ think--without an explanation or an understanding of what I've just told you, it would be a meaningless picture. He's just sort of sitting in his corner. But there was a heck of a lot more meaning to it.

That's kind of too bad. I think pictures should be kind of self-sufficient and ~~don't~~ <sup>nor</sup> need an explanation.

Riess: ~~I'd like to see it. Maybe it isn't. Maybe you're wrong.~~ Maybe it is self-sufficient. This is a case, though, where you really used the background.

Bishop: Right. This is one of those things where I did an Arnold Newman, that's for sure.

Riess: Because that's really what Paul wanted, it sounds like. He wanted a photograph of the atmosphere.

Bishop: That's the way it turned out. But I don't know that-- I'm sure Paul was right appreciative of that. Since then <sup>in</sup> that supplement section on Sunday in the [San Francisco] Chronicle they did a pretty good spread on him. They didn't use the one I'm talking about. Paul has it, but it was not in that group that were used in there. They did this whole spread.

He and Dorothea collected bronze bowls and things. What you would call the diningroom is just full of those. There was one of him sitting at the diningroom table with this whole



Bishop: background as bowls. It turned out just great as a record for him. I think maybe that was more my doing than his. But ~~it~~<sup>I</sup> turned out something that he was very delighted with. While I had the opportunity, in a way I was kind of photographing the essence of Dorothea because it was so apparent.

Riess: Yes, it is, ~~When you get around him, it really is. That's~~  
~~interesting.~~ Of course, you've photographed many photographers.

Bishop: [laughter] Yes, I've done a few. Strangely enough, as long as I've known Ansel I've never photographed him. I have pictures of him here, in the studio, but I didn't take them.

Riess: May I ask if photographing photographers is an intimidating experience?

Bishop: No, it isn't. I didn't come full-bloom into photography, but as a craftsman *in photography* I came into it very quickly and could hold my own, at least technically, at a relatively early age. Maybe dentistry did that for me. I still say dentistry's the best pre-requisite for photography [laughter].

~~Riess: Well, dentists don't dare fumble.~~

~~Bishop:~~ <sup>9</sup> Now, I guess I'm one of the old senior citizens in photography, which I find hard to deal with. But I'd better not get into that.

*Imogen Cunningham*

Riess: This portrait of Imogen. Was she here for this?

Bishop: Yes. We had an afternoon when she did me and I did her. We had a good time, <sup>2</sup> that was done here, in the studio. But that's only one of several of her. That one is much more benign than she--





Bishop: I did that one with another purpose in mind. That wrist watch, which I have cropped out of there just a little bit /<sup>but</sup> is full-face in the original negative, was willed to her by Edward [Weston?]. Which was quite a thing. He really didn't have anything

~~Rice:~~ [surprised] Oh, how interesting.

~~Bishop:~~ He was ~~really~~ almost--I guess you'd call it <sup>a</sup> pauper, or ~~as~~ close to it. Not by the strictest definitions, but he practically had nothing.

[End Tape 2, Side B]



## INTERVIEW # 3 WITH G. PAUL BISHOP

Date of Interview: 21 May 1981

Interviewer: Suzanne Riess

Transcriber: Nicole Bouche

1 tape, 2 sides

[begin tape 3, Side A] ref: Imogen Cunningham

Riess: Twenty years ago you wouldn't have considered her as opened ~~and~~

Bishop: That's right. What I feel is that twenty years ago she had a kind of a bitterness. She was still a little bit aware of ~~about~~ having to do it all on her own. She deserved a great deal more support from other photographers than she got twenty years ago. The recognition, among other photographers, was a little lacking. <sup>9</sup> Actually, that poor girl was out there making a living and doing portraits the hard way, which means they're real. She was very much alone. Dorothea Lange had Paul Taylor there, ~~and~~ <sup>=</sup> her kids came back later, but they were pretty isolated twenty years ago, too. There were <sup>^</sup> few of us who felt very keenly toward her.

~~and~~ I think that's just about the time I did her portrait; that one, up there.

Riess: It's funny. I think of her as some legendary center of a bohemian group. ~~But you don't think that she's~~ ?

Bishop: Well, she certainly was. I guess that started about that time.

[That] was the very beginning of it. In the last fifteen years of her life that would be very true. In the last five years, why, everybody was worshipping her. I was helping a graduate student get her MA <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ Bill Garnett over in environmental design,



Bishop: <sup>Pier</sup> assigned this poor girl to go do a portrait of Imogen. Imogen had this reputation of just eating young photographers for breakfast. Since I was helping her, why, she asked would I intervene ~~in~~ **vene** for her. I called Imogen and asked her if she'd let the girl come over and photograph her. Imogen did, but she made it very clear-- she never was two-faced. She would say, "Yes, but you're imposing on me." Actually, they didn't get along very well, which I [found] kind of sad.

Then, she felt a very great imposition on her time. There was almost a mob of photographic students out in the Bay Area. Somehow, they had discovered her. She just didn't know what happened to her. She lived a pretty simple life. You know, after Benny Bufano died she kind of became the resident artist of San Francisco in Benny's place. All these people had been ignoring her all these years; all of a sudden, here's our unique little strange character. I don't think she appreciated being Benny's successor in that sense.

Riess: ~~That is interesting. I can see how that~~

At the end of the last interview you mentioned something about Weston's wrist watch. What were you saying about that?

Bishop: ~~In the original negative it shows more. I got so much flack on it that I trimmed it just a little bit. You can see it to the edge of that print. [Bishop moves across room, and back]~~

I think what I was starting to say was that Edward died in dire poverty. In fact, ~~[some ?]~~ of the nice people around here kind of got a fund together for his burial. This is such a tragedy because he's probably still the greatest photographer the world has known, at least in my opinion he is. He and Imogen both



Bishop: were very outspoken and both said what they thought at any given time. But they were great friends, <sup>although</sup> they were forever playing pranks on each other. As Imogen did with Ansel, too.  
 [watch],  
 That, anyway, was willed to her and she was very, very proud of it.

So I had put it up, probably not in the best compositional standpoint. It's another one of those things like when I was talking about Dorothea Lange's work room with Paul Taylor. I remember I mentioned the couch. A few pictures, and I dislike it, have to have some sort of an explanation or something looks a little odd. Why this strong image of a wrist watch over in the corner there? When you understand what it is and how much it meant to Imogen, then everything falls together.

Riess: I'm really surprised somebody would talk you into cropping it. I'd like to see it printed full. It's distracting, ~~to have it--~~

Bishop: When you know the story, it surely is. From a compositional standpoint it's, perhaps, a little more distracting when you ~~have the whole watch~~ <sup>to</sup> because it's ~~very~~ important there. It's just a large circle right on the edge, ~~of the~~. Someday I'll show you a print. I don't think I have a print made up of it right now.

*Paul and Dorothea*

Riess: I did look at the ~~Paul~~ Taylor portrait. Not the one that emphasizes the sofa and the absent "other," but the one that does have Dorothea and her desk, and so on, behind. The focus is not sharp on that area. Since you were choosing to include so much graphic material behind there, I wondered why you had chosen to do it in soft focus.





Bishop: I suppose that the real reason is that it was almost a technical impossibility to get both Paul and that in sharp focus. I can't really say that I consciously decided to put that in the softer context. However, I don't think any photographer that's at all realistic doesn't agree with my saying that some of our really good things are purely accidental.

Edward called it intuitional. He said, "Well, I didn't see that seagull sitting right there, but my mind must have known it was there because it was in absolutely the right place." In that sense, I would say that even though my conscious mind saw it as I was either going to get Paul sharp or that sharp because it was done with a type of lighting that <sup>I</sup>~~you~~ didn't have / any choice of using the small aperture. ~~Therefore,~~ <sup>it was</sup> it was done with flash and that meant it was shot at ~~f11~~ where it could have been much better at ~~f32~~, or something.

That is kind of interesting balanced against the idea that the whole experience was one where I'm certainly sure that Paul felt very definately that Dorothea was floating around the room in that somewhat ethereal thing. I almost came to believe it myself, just with the experience. [It] certainly left no doubt that Paul felt her presence that way. Maybe the fortunate accident is that it gives that feeling, perhaps.

Otherwise, what we do is start indexing all of the things in Dorothea's life and looking clearly at the pictures <sup>[behind, taken by]</sup> of her, or something.



[pause in tape]

Riess: Yes, it did make you very aware of Dorothea, that's right.

Bishop: In a strange way, ~~but~~ it did do that. Sure, I'm known as a purist, and very seldom do you find something out of focus in my pictures. But, whatever forces that be, it worked to the advantage of giving the feel of the presence of Dorothea. I know how one could strain to make out, you know, "Oh, is that a picture of Dorothea?", or "Which book is that?" Maybe that's a ~~command look?~~ <sup>to</sup> look <sup>it</sup> ✓

Riess: Yes. I think sometimes it ends up being that.

Ursula and Woodbridge Bingham

I've given you two lists. I'm working my way through lists.

The first is a group of portraits that was chosen by Ursula Bingham for the portrait collection in The Bancroft Library. We're not going to talk about everybody, though you can certainly alter your list. You don't have to be stuck to it at all. The first one that you had checked was Woodbridge Bingham. That's Ursula Bingham's husband?

Bishop: Right.

Riess: What was your acquaintance with him? ~~I guess that's~~ <sup>In</sup> 1971 you did that portrait.

Bishop: ~~71, maybe. No, you're right. Absolutely right.~~

<sup>That's</sup>  
I guess <sup>in</sup> something that's kind of interesting--it certainly crops up time after time--<sup>in</sup> how did you happen to do this particular person? This is kind of an interesting one, ~~because people~~  
~~well, yesterday, during that interview, practically the first~~  
~~question that was asked me is "Well, is it true that you still~~  
~~don't advertise?" That means "they read that article back~~ }



Bishop: ~~in 1950 when I said I didn't advertise. That's still true.~~ I guess anybody from a practical standpoint wonders, how do you get your people?"

They come ~~from~~ various ways. <sup>[one]</sup> This is kind of fun. ~~My~~  
~~little girl~~ Patsy, my daughter, <sup>✓</sup> was going to college here at that time. She happens to be the extroverted one of the three children. The other two are kind of quiet and shy. Little Patsy is a natural-born extrovert and salesperson type. To make extra money for herself while she was going through school, she was selling Avon products door-to-door, which would kill me. **But**  
~~To ring a doorbell and--~~

Riess: ~~Yes.~~

Bishop: <sup>she</sup> She loved it because <sup>✓</sup> was always wanting to see who was going to be on the other side of the door. If I talk people to death while I do their portraits, she's even better at it than I am. I guess it was her only drawback. She got so involved with talking to the people she spent much, much more time than the sales warranted.

Anyway, that's exactly how this came. She rang the Bingham family doorbell, and started talking to Mrs. Bingham and selling her Avon products. I suppose Mrs. Bingham said, "What does your father do?" or something like that. That's how it all came about. Through Mrs. Bingham's interest in Patsy she got to thinking in terms of getting a picture of Professor Bingham.

Riess: So, quite unconnected with any other University connection.

Bishop: Yes. Actually it turned out / <sup>very</sup> fortuitous. The sad side of it is that this was done while everything was just fine in the Bingham family. It was very shortly after this time--you know, it was



Bishop: their nephew that got the guns into San Quentin and a couple people got killed. The nephew's never been heard from since.

~~Riess: [Indistinguishable comments underlying Bishop's remarks]~~

~~Bishop:~~ It's a proud, old East Coast family and it was a terrible shake-up. Professor Bingham kind of went down hill from then on. I've seen him on campus several times. He was really robust and healthy. I think that shook him up badly. It was kind of nice, I'm sure, that we got this picture before. <sup>P</sup> I've never known exactly what the motivation of Mrs. Bingham was to purchase those prints for the Library. She ~~didn't~~ [?] obviously liked the picture of Professor Bingham. She came in one day and said that she was [giving to the Library a collection of g. Paul Bishop's portraits] interested in doing that. She <sup>✓</sup> apparently <sup>✓</sup> had some womens group or something that she <sup>✓</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>✓</sup> When she first expressed it to me, that she might get ~~several of them~~ to contribute to ~~do~~ this. At the time, she made the statement that if they didn't she wanted to **go ahead** with it herself. **And**

~~Riess: So it was on her <sup>own</sup> initiative.~~

~~Bishop:~~ I think it's entirely her doing. It wasn't due to the participation of the other women.

Riess: ~~That's very interesting. All on her own initiative.~~

~~Okay. Her <sup>husband</sup> Shipp. Handsome looking character. Sort of fascinating face. How did he~~ Oh, I was going to ask one thing about the Bingham. I looked at the portrait and it seemed, ~~more so than any of your others~~, like it was really taken from below.

Bishop: Well, you're probably right about that. ~~I don't know that I will say more so than others, but~~ it's something I do occasionally.





Bishop: Very, very seldom do it with women.

I'll have to tell you the inside on this. See that chair over there with the shiny black arms and all? I call that my professorial chair. That's the one he's sitting in. It kind of lends itself to that particular type of picture which you saw Professor Bingham in. It's reminiscent of the leather-type desk chair. The trick there is ~~you~~<sup>I</sup> slide them well back into the chair so that they aren't leaning away from me. I think we discussed that leaning away from the camera before. Slide them well back into it so that they're kind of leaning forward, giving them what<sup>is</sup>~~is~~--if we have to use adjectives--more of a dynamic feeling. He was kind of tired and relaxed. I think that I felt there was a magnitude about the man. So I put him in that chair, leaning forward. Then I got my camera somewhat lower than usual, which gave an upward angle at him, which probably gave him a feeling of a little more stature than he might have had. In other words, the camera angle--you know, these things are often important. If somebody gets up above you and shoots down at you, they have really diminished you, or in a sense squashed you. If you do the opposite of that you've done the other.

Riess: Oh, I understand the dynamics of it.

Bishop: Why did I do it?

Riess: The question is, how is this philosophically in keeping with your unmanipulated ~~that is a way of~~ portrait?



Bishop: It does seem like a contradiction to you, I guess. To me it didn't, although I certainly would be the first to say--I've got a little something to tell you about that in a minute. But staying on the point of him, it was a technique which I think was justified because there was this feeling about him. I guess we talked about that I try to do these things by intuition. This was just simply a technique, very much the same as if you might have walked around the room to get a head turned in a certain way.

Riess: It brought out what you had felt in him anyway.

Bishop: That's right. I think it was a good, fair and honest picture of him done this way.

Darius Milhaud

If it's all right to diverge just a moment, there's something important there ~~that~~, since we've brought up this subject. This will go clear back to Darius Milhaud. Gee, I don't know if he's in the Bancroft collection.

Riess: No, he isn't.

Bishop: If he isn't, he will be.

Riess: Good.

Bishop: I did him out at Mills [College]. Milhaud was probably about three hundred pounds, and <sup>had</sup> kind of a greenish cast to his skin. I had never met him before I went out there to do it. I wasn't even aware of Yusef Karsh's picture of him before. But it makes a point. When I got there he was moving around the room in a wheelchair because it was very difficult for him to walk. He strenuously objected to--in no way were we going to do him in a wheelchair. He got into a wicker-type chair that you see him in.



Riess: Creaked and groaned under him.

Bishop: Yes, right. ~~Then he told me that~~ this little table that's in front of him--~~/~~ Artists, and I've got a few hangups myself, ~~-- he said~~ tend to have hangups, that this was one of his creative tools. He did his composing on that little kitchen table and he took it to France with him every year. To him it was a very important thing in the picture. To me, yes, it was too.

Okay. So, I had him seated and he slumped and--God damn it! He could look like a frog sitting there just because he was so obese. The head was small and the body got bigger. My feeling was--and I think it's in his eyes and this sort of thing. His music-- I'm sure you know it-- it's like Bartok, mostly percussion sort of thing and very, very much alive. I felt this tremendous contrast between this poor dilapidated body, but the mind is still going great. This beautiful music is such a denial of the devastation of the body.

That was my way of doing it. It turns out that Karsh had done him sometime before, maybe a year or so before. Karsh used this same technique that exaggerated, that I did of--  
[doorbell interruption]

Riess: You were saying that Karsh had done the same sort of pose, ~~to~~  
~~emphasis~~

Bishop: The same technique. He attempted to get rid of this obesity and glorify the man. I didn't feel he needed it. I felt that the expression on his face, and if you have any knowledge of his music, it was all there. Karsh got the poor man up on top of



Bishop: this table so that he could get his camera clear down to the floor and get this big sweep going up. Then he took the glasses and the picture is something like this, with an arm extended toward the camera holding these glasses [gesturing]--

Riess: [laughter]

Bishop: --and used a wide-angle lense so that the first thing you see are these rather enlarged glasses down here and then this long sweep of this arm, which slenderized the body, and this rather small head clear up at the top. I think that's insulting. But it's an exaggeration of the same / <sup>[technique]</sup> ~~I used a little tiny bit of~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~it~~ on Bingham; ~~where this exaggeration~~

Riess: ~~Yes. It does sound like a difference.~~ I'd like to see both of those pictures side by side.

Bishop: The famous picture of Joe Lewis--and I've forgotten who did it-- was much the same technique, with his <sup>huge</sup> ~~high~~ fist as it extended, and the long arm, so the fist is tremendous in the front of the picture. The wide-angle lense gives this big fist and this arm going on forever up to a small head.

Herschel Chipp  
Riess: The next person we had chosen to talk about was Herschel Chipp. I actually was very struck by that portrait, too. It's so sad.

Bishop: Did it seem sad to you? [surprised]

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: That's interesting. ~~I would have said--~~

Riess: Well, contemplative, but essentially I thought sad. ~~I didn't~~ ~~know what~~





Bishop: I guess the record should be consulted to see if I'm right. But as I remember, the sadness might be coming from the fact that, I think, there was trouble in the department. He had been the chairman of the art department, ~~and~~ the art historians. I think this dates about the time that ~~that~~

~~Riess: Same time. It was 1971.~~

~~Bishop:~~ that [Peter] Selz was leaving the museum and coming back into taking over art history. The transition-- and the reason for the picture--was that Chipp was going back to join forces with the Franklin Mint, I suppose in the merchandizing of their ~~medals~~.

Riess: Oh. Is that what happened to him?

Bishop: Yes. I suppose it was a time of somewhat--well, you know the politics we have on campus. I think there was a lot of that showing in his face. We had an excellent time together. I've never thought of it as a sad picture, but it very likely would be. I've got a lot of negatives of him.

Riess: Oh, it's a lovely picture. I wrote down something about "hands odd." ~~There was some oddness and sort of sadness about it all.~~

Bishop: The hands are kind of up, almost on a level with the front of his face, which is unusual, at least in my work. The eyes are turned just slightly toward you. It's almost a profile and the eyes turned toward you. It was one that I printed specially and had not printed that negative before. I printed it specially for that show at Heller Gallery. As I went back to re-do him I looked at all the contact sheets and picked that one. ~~I just felt~~  
~~that~~



~~Riess:~~ I'm thinking of the one in the Bingham collection. I'm not thinking of the one that was in the Heller Gallery.

~~Bishop:~~ Oh! Let's see now. What are the hands doing in the Bingham collection?

Riess: ~~Would better not get into that [laughter].~~ Was it commissioned by the art department or by Chipp himself?

Bishop: ~~No.~~ By Chipp.

Riess: That's very interesting. I'm fascinated at the self-consciousness of deciding that it's time--that that would be for him the time to memorialize himself.

Bishop: I don't want to stick a pin in it. I have a feeling that, ~~dog gone it,~~ <sup>dog gone it,</sup> it was probably paid for by The Franklin Mint.

~~Riess:~~ Oh, I see.

~~Bishop:~~ But I like your version better.

Riess: ~~But why would they?~~ Just because they wanted to emphasize how illustrious he was?

Bishop: Well, because he was coming into a new position.

~~Riess:~~ I see.

~~Bishop:~~ I think this was probably publicity that went along with that. But I do like your version better.

I've got to put in one little thing. One of the joys that has happened--I've never had a young man do it, but I've had it three times, through the years, with young women that are just one year or two on either side of twenty, ~~let's~~ <sup>let's</sup> say from eighteen to twenty-one or two. [It] has happened three times. They've come in and they've said they feel that they're emerging from



Bishop: one phase of their life and going into another, and did I think we could do anything about trying to record, primarily, the one they were emerging from. Which is, of course an impossibility. You do blend them both. I found it such a touching thing. With that kind of preamble I really tend to outdo myself. I think it's such a great thing. I think more people would like it so much if they thought in those terms. It's best done, I think, completely independent of mothers who tend to put their interpretation into it. The mother could say, "Well, go have this done," and then stay out of it, and not edit it. It would be a more <sup>bonafide</sup> ~~bonified~~ thing.

Riess: Twenty years ago that emerging process was the emerging from being a young woman to being a married woman. The engagement portrait was the one that really recorded that transition.

Bishop: Which was a terrible time to record it.

Riess: Yes, but it was ~~the~~ significant. Now people have a sense of their own selves that's separate from that particular rite of passage, perhaps. I guess men don't as much though. ~~Women would do that.~~

Fred Cousins--taught in the PE department.

Bishop: Yes. He goes way back. ~~He is one of those I talked about when I first got started doing my professors up there.~~ He was one in the portfolio from the change of the Stiles Hall publicity there. He was just full of enthusiasm for getting the Stiles Hall going, and one of the group in there.



~~As He's one of the ones you had checked as being particularly significant.~~

~~Bishop: Yes. Significant in with our first interview didn't we discuss how this got started?~~

~~Riess: Yes, right.~~

Bishop: ~~He was one of those original ones that started that.~~ I think I mentioned then that President Sproul took a real interest in it. It was that set of pictures, including Fred Cousins and some of those, that started the whole ball rolling of my thing with faculty at Cal.

*The Hands Tell the Story*

Riess: You didn't check Will Dennis. That really is a very handsome portrait of him though.

Bishop: I do remember him as a very kind and gentle person, a sensitive person. Let's see if I can recall that picture. I think it emphasizes hands, too, doesn't it.

~~Riess: Yes~~

~~Bishop: I took that a long time ago. He had a long, slender face.~~

~~Riess: Yes. What is it?~~

Bishop: Tweed jacket [laughter].

Riess: ~~about the hands?~~ Yes. All those good professors, full professors, are always tweedy. Do you make a special effort to have the hands be eloquent? The hands are doing a lot of things in those portraits.

Bishop: I think they're extremely expressive of people and very, very important. Look at that one of Aldous Huxley up there. What do we see in the hands? Take his right hand first. It's probably more revealing than any of the others. When you see





Bishop: a hand that is folded in that manner, and the fingers that way, I think you can--I know I'm clinically right in saying that the man is feeling pain. It isn't a tenseness. In a sense, it's relaxed and yet it shows that there is a malfunction of the body system, I think, if you see that. The same sort of a thing will show up in the portrait of Edward Weston, where his hands look very much like the right hand up there, showing a basic illness in the person. I don't think it's unrealistic at all to say that the hands are very indicative.

If you go for a physical I guess you're very aware that the doctor very often will hold your hands and look at your nails or something. Of course, what he's doing there is trying to judge whether you're anemic or not. He's looking at the color of the blood under the fingernail. It's kind of interesting that the hands are great betrayers of ~~the~~ **body**].

But if you look at his left hand, what do you see? The hand shows almost the emaciation of the body, with the bones so prominent. Yet, the vitality in it--the way the thumb is, and as he's talking that hand is swinging back and forth. I think it's a very good example of --

[end tape 3, Side A]

[Begin tape 3, Side B]

Bishop: I was saying that the texture of hands can be very revealing. But I said from a portrait standpoint, it can get you into trouble, although I think it's something that should be considered.



~~Riess: Would you say that people are less willing to accept an ugly hand than they are to accept a~~?

~~Bishop: Well, here we go.~~ There is an age group, and forgive me for what I'm about to say but it occurs with women and I'm not being chauvinistic or difficult, but very often an age group between twenty and thirty take very much better care of their face than they do of the skin of their hands. Maybe the palms are good because they rub their face a lot, but the outside of their hands are apt to be dry and scaly. If you're 100% realistic, those hands are a big betrayal. They contradict the youthfulness that might have been kept into the face. The hands give it away.

That, I don't think, was your original thing, though. But <sup>[hand.]</sup> they <sup>^</sup>show a great deal about the person, from many different standpoints. Look at the resigned feeling of Robert Frost. The hands--he's forgotten he has them. It just simply reaffirms the whole posture of the man.

Riess: Yes, it does. In a lot of your portraits they become as important as the face. ~~For the most part they seem to be in these excruciating positions.~~

~~Bishop: [laughter] That's interesting. Why do you use that word?~~

Riess: ~~Oh just, you know, people just sort of caught like that [gestures or points to a portrait]. I think often their faces have finally come~~ *are in* ~~to some~~ repose. They're relating with you with their face. But ~~while the~~ <sup>while the</sup> their hands are still amply demonstrating how uncomfortable the whole experience is.

Bishop: [Laughter] Well, you're absolutely right, of course. But I think that's part of the statement. I've got to remind you--I think, again,



Bishop: didn't we talk about this thing that I have of having people look at my prints and I kind of watch them?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: If you came in I think I said I would watch you. What we're talking about, I guess, is what people have come to term "body language." Feet will display it too, but hands most certainly will display it. The face is saying one thing and the hands or the feet could be saying just something very, very different. Somewhere in between those is what's real.

Riess: Do you really watch out for it when you're taking the picture?

Bishop: Oh, you have to be terribly aware of it. I don't always use it.

I was supposed to have the proofs out yesterday, and I won't have them out till next week, but I've done--what is his name? He's just retired, I think, from psychology. Anyway, on that set of negatives, which I haven't proofed yet, I started out with a large head, no hands. I began to realize that my picture was going on down here [gestures] underneath where my camera was aiming. His hands became very expressive. It wasn't the texture in this case. It was, as you call it, the twisting. I've never put it in those--that "excruciating" kind of tickles me. I don't know whether I accept it entirely or not. They were really telling so much about him that I ran one roll of his head and then changed lenses and did three-quarter views from then on. As I say, I haven't printed them yet but I think they're going to be great.

054



Riess: I can't get into this further, but you're saying that they tell so much about him. It's an interesting question of whose interpretation it's going to be.

~~same Dhaemers and Bill Gomer~~  
Margaret Dhaemers. That's such an interesting portrait, and since you do so few women, ~~at least, there were so few women to do in the University, I guess--~~

Bishop: You know what's so ironic about that? If you asked me the question in a different way I would say to you that I much prefer doing women to men. I enjoy it more. I get more pleasure out of doing pictures of women than I do men. Yet the body of my work would seem to deny that. I think ~~they'll~~ <sup>it</sup> I'll have to honestly say that <sup>it</sup> isn't always my choice of who I'm going to do. If I were just free to go out and say, "Hey, can I do a picture of you?" it would be the other way around.

Riess: She and a couple of people seem to have come to you from the visual arts department.

Bishop: Yes. Penny is a very interesting one. I don't know how much detail you'd like ~~to~~ on that. There's a lot in her case.

Riess: Oh, I don't know. I was only responding to the portrait itself. ~~But, please, say--~~

Bishop: ~~There's a lot of importance there.~~ Back about eight years ago, the telephone rang and started a whole new phase of my career. It was Margaret Dhaemers asking if I would be interested in being a lecturer for a summer session up there. Of course, she's a professor of photography in environmental design. My first reaction was, "Oh, I can do without that." Fortunately, she





Bishop: called again some time after I'd thought about it for a couple of weeks. I decided to do it, and launched into a phase of my life that I've enjoyed tremendously. I've been teaching very steadily ever since. Penny was very important in that.

Penny was the chairman of the department. A very dynamic person. Of course, a photographer. I think she got her degree from Mills, if I'm not mistaken. She came into my life there and it's a very important thing.

The picture was actually done just because I was interested in her. It was an invitational picture. She's a little bit different looking, in the sense that--I don't know all that many women professors on the campus but Penny is certainly individualistic. [laughter]

Riess: The tinted glasses and the lighting is particularly dramatic.

Bishop: Her very bleached

~~Riess: Streaming hair.~~

~~Bishop:~~ blond hair. Her leather britches. It was done in the days of the rather short skirt, and a leather skirt at that. I can remember the picture very well. There's a basic, rather dim light on the front of her. Her hair is illuminated brightly. Then there's sidelights that come down on the hassock ~~and come down the side of~~

Riess: Yes. It's more dramatically lit than you would have done for a lot of people.

Bishop: I think if you met Penny you'd find that the feelings that you might have gotten from the picture--I'm not sure what your feeling would have been but--I think they would have jibed with



Bishop: your feeling of Penny. I suppose you could consider her controversial, certainly not to the <sup>extent --</sup> ~~eccentric~~. She's tenured, so she couldn't have been too controversial in our great setup up here. But she's an artist and she appears as an artist. She's very authoritarian. I think it shows in there.

Riess: I wondered how she fit into things.

Frank Freeman. I <sup>noted</sup> ~~say~~ here, "handsome head. Marvelous tilt to head." I ~~don't quite remember that head, but anyway Frank Freeman you've checked.~~

Bishop: Frank is fine. He came because at one time I was associated pretty closely with the Pacific School of Religion, in the sense of doing most of their photography. Although he was a professor on campus he was also on the board at the Pacific School of Religion. He originally came because I was doing <sup>the</sup> ~~faculty~~ <sup>of PSR.</sup> members. Although I don't think he was ever a faculty member there, he was on the board and they sent him down from there. It turned out that he was also a very avid photographer. He was very active in the Berkeley Camera Club. Very good. That went so far as he and one Dr. Takahashi, who's dead--they're both dead now; Takahashi was the leading member of the Berkeley Camera Club and a leading Berkeley optometrist. <sup>the</sup> ~~The~~ three of us kind of formed a little group. We tried to do it on the basis of every <sup>meeting</sup> other week. They'd all gather here in the studio, and we'd get in here a model or a subject, or something. All three of us would photograph away. That went on for quite a long while. I knew him better as a photographer than professionally.

Riess: That's interesting.



Bishop: But it's a handsome head.

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: Apparently/<sup>a</sup>very, very much liked person.

Riess: Okay, Bill Garnett. ~~We talked about--~~

Bishop: Ah, a good one. I glad we picked Bill. It's kind of too bad to talk about Penny without talking about Bill. There's only two tenured professors of photography at the University of California at Berkeley. Bill Garnett is one and Penny Dhaemers is the other. They both reside in the same building, <sup>Wurster</sup> ~~Worster~~ Hall. As I have said <sup>to</sup> the students <sup>right</sup> there, "if you possibly can swing it, take courses from both of them. You'll learn the warp and woof of photography for sure." Just as diametrically opposite in their points of view as ~~you can possibly be~~. Their appearance, their dress, their attitude toward life, are just absolut<sup>e</sup>ly different.

Their photography is so different. Bill is a very famous photographer. He's had three Guggenheims. He's most famous as an aerial photographer. But Bill is an uptight person, definitely by the book. Penny is a conceptual person with a great deal of freedom in her viewing. As different as two photographers can be. Bill was a very hard-driving and very hard task master; Penny is just the opposite.

One of the kind of interesting things about Bill is that--I heard a professor of astronomy talking about him, <sup>at</sup> ~~in~~ some length. You can tell that these kids would have trouble sometimes with Bill.



Bishop: You know how the campus has gotten. The students are certainly very much more relaxed than when either one of us went to school ~~there~~. Bill is probably the only professor--at least the only one I'm aware of--that's still wearing a crewcut. . I think that says it all. He's six feet tall, he's very severe and very sedate. The crewcut <sup>when</sup> in days <sup>^</sup> a lot of people don't even go to a barber anymore. But it's so indicative of his personality. It's beautiful.

And here you have these two people, professors of photography in the same building, sharing the same photolab. They kind of politely stay out of each other's way because their viewpoints are so radically different. I think it's just great. It's the best hope they've got of turning out some good photographers out of there.

Bill is best known for aerial photography. The interesting thing there is myself, and many others like me, we fought the war, essentially, as ~~an~~ aerial photographers, and had gone through the government's training in that direction. They impressed us all at graduation--"We spent twenty-five thousand dollars educating you," and all of that bologna. The major war effort was aerial reconnaissance and that. Myself and a lot of others came back. Just as the war ended, Bill--[he] had done police-type work with photography before the war, but had done no aerial--got into this little airplane to fly from New York back to California, and happened to take his camera with him--completely a neophyte in aerial photography and everything--and made his first shots coming back on a ride that he hitched in a military aircraft.





Bishop: That was the beginning of--he's a very famous aerial<sup>photographer</sup> now. Those of us who had been very highly trained in that direction kind of took it all for granted. Personally, I dislike flying very, very much. I'm no competition, but it is funny.

Riess: Well, are you saying that you saw the beautiful patterns but just didn't think to photograph them.

Bishop: I have to honestly say that we never saw them the way Bill does. Bill saw things. I've been up there and I've taken pictures, and I've looked at my pictures. No.

One of the beautiful things, Suzanne, about this whole thing of photography is that after you've really matured in it you realize you're doing your thing, because it really is your thing. It's no joke that Ansel should take the landscapes and I should take the portraits; Bill should take the aerial and I should take the portraits. Bill is a very ridged personality and would have a terrible time doing portraits. He doesn't even touch it. He knows it. I don't think he ever does even pictures of his children. I think that's really beautiful.

It's <sup>going to</sup> kind of come into conflict on this other thing I was telling you about earlier. This groups wants to make something of my mountain things, which are there because I love the mountains. But, heavens-to-Betsy, compared to Ansel's things, mine will look like weak tea. [laughter]

~~Riess: [laughter] Well, we don't have the end to that story. That's interesting, though.~~

~~Alfred F. Kroeber. I think we've really talked about him.~~

~~Bishop: The one thing that we left out and never did finish I wanted to just get it in I guess I did Theodora three separate times. It~~



Charles Hitch

Charles

Reiss: ~~Hitch~~, but you ~~do~~ have a portrait of Hitch against a white background. It's just a head, really.

Bishop: There's kind of a funny story on that.

Riess: I'd like to hear it.

Johnson  
Forn

Bishop: Hitch had a man who was called Dean {Johnson}. I don't think that was a title; I think that was his first name. He was his publicity man. To go way back to the beginnings, I got this telephone call. They asked would I send a portfolio up to Hitch's office. He was requesting them from several photographers. I had only one thing like that that would qualify. It's quite a treasure because it's got a lot of good work in it. I didn't really want to part with it, but I did.

No response. No response. About six weeks later I really didn't care too much. I was a little annoyed. What I was after was to get my portfolio back. I assumed that, since I hadn't heard of him, the thing was down the drain. In fact, it was not. I just didn't realize how busy he was when he first came to California. This is when I ran into Dean Johnson--"Oh, yes. We do want to do this thing."

So, we made an appointment and I did him. You remember, this was just right at the sixties when the campus was falling apart. [pause in tape due to phone] Anyway, they came down and we started the sitting. I, in general, try to get a <sup>fairly</sup> very pleasant



Bishop: thing about people. Sometimes it's obviously somebody who can't, or something. But in this case, I worked like the dickens. Hitch <sup>had</sup> ~~was~~ really a very severe look. I finally succeeded in getting a couple where at least it was broken a little bit; it didn't have the severity. I wouldn't really call it a smile even. It wasn't quite even that.

Then he had to go back to New York. I think he was in transit between the two places, finishing up his work there and coming out here. They were in a hurry and Dean Johnson came down. He and I selected this proof which <sup>he</sup> ~~at least there was~~ <sup>had</sup> a slight pleasantry on his face. We made one hundred prints of it in a mad rush. Hitch got back just about the time I delivered the one hundred prints and, "No way!" He wanted to see the proofs and he picked the one that you saw, which became his official picture. A very strong, severe face.

Riess: So the one hundred prints you did were not-~~used~~.

Bishop: That's right. We just did them all over again. They kindly ~~of~~ paid for the ones that they didn't-~~use~~. I don't know what ever became of them. I thought it was so strange. Somebody later heard about this and said, "Well, the only mistake you made was not having that cigar in his mouth at the same time."

Sometime after that I had two occasions to photograph the Regents while they were in session over at Richardson Hall. Sure enough, he sits there with a half-smoked cigar that isn't really smoking because somebody there--one of the women--just wouldn't tolerate the cigar smoke.



Riess: Because you knew it was an official portrait, you had to have a white-~~background~~?

Bishop: That was specified. It was made only for publicity. In his case I didn't do anything but that. It was <sup>✓</sup>very clear cut; this is the way it's going to be, ~~sort of thing~~. No nonsense. Left to my own devices, I know full well that newspapers prefer light backgrounds. Very often we do some with newspaper in mind and then something that would be a more pleasing, to my sense ~~of at~~ least, portrait besides.

~~In this case~~, he was just going to take control of the problems of the sixties. He started out with a very firm grip. I guess he ended up that way, too. I think it's a good picture of Hitch, ~~for what it's worth~~.

Riess: Interesting.

*Mary and Harold Jones*

The next two we come to are Harold and Mary Jones. The Harold Jones portrait I've seen a lot. It's used certainly at lot. ~~It was done at a different time.~~

Bishop: Yes. It was done first. The reason for what you just said is that Mary Jones was, still is, a great promoter of Harold Jones. I'm sure she saw to it that he had got a lot of publicity.

Riess: Did she send him in ~~to~~?

Bishop: I can't really be sure of that. He made the contact. That's been quite awhile ago. I remember so well because I was right in the midst of ~~being~~ <sup>building</sup> this brick wall ~~that was built~~. So he goes back a long way. He was very quiet / <sup>and</sup> I had the feeling, somewhat--  
~~She's~~ <sup>so</sup> so definite and so sure of her decisions, and he seems ~~to~~ <sup>so</sup> unsure.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions of the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions of the Board of Directors of the Corporation.



Bishop: Just quite opposite. A very mild person. The picture shows him as a very mild person.

She emerges as the power of the family. After he died she came down with some papers of his and had me photograph his signature. From then on she had these pictures made up with his signature printed on photographically--in a sense, autographed photographs.

Riess: Yes. I assumed that. I couldn't understand what that was about. What was the point of that?

Bishop: It was her idea. I guess she just wanted autographed pictures of him. I think she felt his loss very much. This was her way of commemorating him.

The rest of the story is kind of interesting. When Bowker came on campus there was a little celebration sort of thing. Actually, the show at Heller Gallery was tied in with the celebration for Heyman, except he never got in. He was supposed to come in and have his portrait done for that show but he never got in for it. I never did a picture of Bowker, either. Anyway, the Faculty Club asked if they could have an exhibit of professors. It pretty much filled up the Great Hall and the lobby in there. These shows always seem to have some sort of name. That one was called "Memorable Mentors," which I guess was a good name for faculty. Anyway, because of that very thing--that the picture of Harold Jones has his signature on it, which I find a little bit offensive--I had quit using it. So I didn't include it in



Bishop: this show. Wouldn't you know, Mary *Cover* Jones was on my tail in a hurry! She demanded, on the telephone, "Why didn't you use Harold's picture in the show?" It boiled down to--forget the whys--a demand that it be in there. Then I--who's to argue. She's a dear, sweet lady, but she was so upset that he was left out of that group that she made a big thing of it. Of course, I put it in.

I did her somewhere along the line. I'm sure I had done her by the time that show was there. She was just a sweet, grandmotherly type. She has ~~order~~ <sup>ordered some more</sup> only about six weeks ago, of her.

Riess: Of the one of her?

Bishop: Yes. She keeps using them quite a bit.

Riess: 1969 is when you did it. Actually, ~~she is a sweet, grandmotherly type and~~ <sup>does show</sup> that portrait is not a sweet grandmother. That's a pretty tough lady in that portrait.

Bishop: [laughter] I think you can understand why it came out that way. My experiences with her--she might be a velvet-gloved grandma but, boy, don't kid yourself. The gal's got both feet on the ground and she's slugging.

Riess: For me it certainly was a different view of her. ~~I've seen her~~

Bishop: That was her choice. I had chosen one that was different. That was her choice. She seems very happy with it.

Riess: It's the only portrait in the entire collection where the technical details are included. [reading] <sup>Bronica</sup> ~~Veronica~~ S 2, 200mm <sup>nikkor</sup> ~~nieer~~, <sup>metol</sup> ~~metal~~ acetone, plus X, veritone TD55." ~~Hot stuff.~~



~~Riess: At last we know what he does.~~

Bishop: That is one of those beautiful ambitions. For me it's kind of like trying to keep a diary. It's something I know I should do, because I like to think this body of work I'm giving to Bancroft is going to be--I don't know if I should compare; I think I'm a better photographer than Muybridge ever was--but I'd like to think that some day some students are going to find some value in looking at Paul Bishop's pictures too. It was my intent that all this data be on the back of the prints. I don't know. ~~Let's see. It should--~~

[end tape 3, Side b]



## INTERVIEW #4 WITH G. PAUL BISHOP

Date of Interview: 28 May 1981

Interviewer: Suzanne Riess

Transcriber: Nicole Bouche

[begin tape 4, Side A]

The Anthropology Portraits: William Bascom

Bishop: David Mandelbaum is an anthropologist. I did him--do you have a date on there? That's probably the first date because I don't think that they have my recent picture of him.

Riess: Oh, okay. Let me just check that, 1960.

~~Bishop: It's been back a long time ago.~~

~~Riess: I'm really so pleased I have these lists. 1960 is the one~~

~~Ursula~~

Bishop: There's also a 1980, After twenty years-- He came to me because-- I never asked you, Did you know Betty Conners? You must have.

Riess: Yes, right. Arts and Lectures.

Bishop: Yes. Betty and I were real good friends. She sent a lot of people to me. He did a series of summer lectures in '60. That was the motivation of getting him here. I guess I remember him so well ~~is~~ because I have always <sup>felt</sup> thought anthropology would be such a fascinating thing. I don't know how one could ever make a living outside of teaching. <sup>it</sup> I guess my interest in him stimulated back and forth and we became pretty good friends. The second one is because he retired. The anthropology department has collected portraits of retirees for the last eight years, and had big, 16 x 20 photographs made of them, <sup>and</sup> ~~I've~~ never put them up or anything, <sup>Thy</sup> <sup>I</sup> must have them stored away somewhere. <sup>guess they</sup> <sup>I</sup> have these hopes of someday





Bishop: establishing this room with all these pictures.

Riess: Have you been commissioned for ~~most of~~ them?

Bishop: Yes, I think those that have retired in the last eight years.

I think we're talking about six people, including Mandelbaum.

Riess: Do you try to have a uniform format then?

Bishop: Yes, <sup>and</sup> I'm not entirely sure that I'm all that pleased with it. *In each case,*

I think I'm correct<sup>^</sup> I could be a little mistaken; some of them may not be that way<sup>^</sup> But certainly in the case of Mandelbaum, and more recently Professor Bascom, they have brought artifacts, kind of at my suggestion. Do you remember <sup>the</sup> one of Mandelbaum with white hair and he's holding a little--it looks almost like a lunch basket--in his hands?

Riess: No, no.

Bishop: It's actually a lunch basket but it's a burial thing. It comes from India. Of course, they burn their bodies there but they have this full little lunch basket of food <sup>for them</sup> to go with them. [They] burn that along with them.

Riess: That's an amusing choice, ~~for his~~--

Bishop: Yes. This is what he chose to have. It looks to all the world like a little picnic lunch basket.

Professor Bascom has a very large, carved-- /<sup>some</sup> dark, hard wood that I think is South American. The little lunch basket on Mandelbaum's lap is one thing and not too hard to contend with. This one that Professor Bascom has--I guess the wing-spread was just under three feet. Here's this thing and it created quite a photographic problem that demands a great deal of attention. I've got it around here somewhere-- it isn't out in the stack yet-- if you'd like to see it.



Riess: What if you're having a problem? ~~Do you do everything you can~~  
<sup>How do you</sup>  
~~do to~~ mask the fact that you're having a problem, from your  
 sitter?

Bishop: Certainly you try to solve it, internally, shall we say, before  
 you do the external bit. If all your efforts just fail, then you  
 have to bring it out in the open and say, "Well, we're having a  
 problem," and take to something else.

In this one, getting off Mandelbaum to Professor Bascom,  
 the department also supplied the family with the finished print,  
 too. I guess that picture was done just about this time last year.  
 I hadn't heard anything from them until I got back from the  
 summer and it was nearly Christmas. Mrs. Bascom came by and said  
 that she just wasn't happy with the picture.

What had happened--to preserve this, it almost looked like  
 an eagle with it's wings straight and this vertical body forming  
 a cross up there--it took up so much of the picture that I cropped  
 the edge of the professor's shoulder on the margin of the picture.  
 It kind of centered the picture better, I thought. [That's] why  
 I did it. But she kind of resented that. She thought that it  
 gave the woodcarving much more emphasis than it did the professor.

Fortunately, in my original negative this shoulder was there  
 and I did <sup>the prints</sup> ~~it~~ over. She was in recently, just a couple of weeks  
 ago, and [is] very, very happy with it all now. It isn't one of  
 my great pictures, unfortunately. Sometimes those things take  
 over too much.

I remember our talking about how I put those pictures over  
 the mantel there to live with them. I have one up there now



Bishop: that's kind of doing that. It's a classical guitarist holding the guitar. I'm not sure about that. The others I think I'm pretty sure about. But the guitar one--we've got much the same problem. The guitar is so demanding. He has a very interesting face, but here's a guitar fighting with it for prominence.

Riess: ~~You realized that~~ the portrait of a head is ~~just such~~ a limited thing. The minute you introduce anything--teeth, glasses, hands, watch, anything~~o~~

Bishop: Right. Of course, our big battle is always <sup>became one has</sup> ~~you have~~ such a limited subject matter. You try to keep them interesting and different. So, ~~How~~ would you call it? In one way, you welcome these little things because it gives diversity to the picture. Well, it gives you an easy out for diversity. On the other hand, there's that fine line. At what point do they cease to add a little bit to the picture, and at what point do they take over? ~~and put the person--~~ Instead of being like an adjective, they almost become the noun.

Riess: Yes, precisely the problem.

Czeslaw Milosz, and the Matter of Credit  
Milosz came to you.

Bishop: Boy, you pronounce that much better than I can. [laughter]

Riess: [laughter] He came to you in 1976. What was happening in his life that he needed a portrait for? ~~Was that a jacket?~~

Bishop: No, ~~it wasn't~~. He was embarking on a series of lectures. These were ~~for~~ the publicity pictures, <sup>for</sup> just sending ahead for a lecture series. I think it was mostly <sup>the</sup> ~~university's~~ <sup>ies and</sup> different campuses.



Bishop: The thing that stands out the most in my mind is his pixy quality. And there's something strange about his eyes. They're always, habitually kind of bloodshot, but they look so eager and they're slightly protruding out of rather deep-set sockets. They're always kind of bloodshot<sup>↑</sup> but it looks like he's just so eagerly trying to take the whole world in that he almost has an eye inflammation doing it. At least that's the feeling it has. Then he wears his hair in a straight pompadour back; then these <sup>huge,</sup> bushy eyebrows on pretty prominent bone structure. <sup>It gives</sup> His kind of ~~I~~ I would call it a pixy-type of look~~o~~. I'm sure <sup>he's</sup> a very deep-thinking and ~~obviously~~, from his political background and everything in Poland there's a great deal of sadness in his life. But you certainly don't feel that, ~~he's very--~~

Riess: What did you talk to him about, do you remember?

Bishop: The thing that we mostly talked about, believe it or not, rather than all these good things was his jacket and his clothes, and his feeling that he wanted to project a certain type of image.

Riess: That's interesting.

Bishop: It's kind of disappointing / <sup>because [of]</sup> all this beautiful field of knowledge that he had. But in this case, his first thought was to wear a very somber, dark suit. I kind of suggested that he would be more professorial if he were to wear more of a tweedy sort of thing. We had quite a discussion on that. He went into the point of a necktie and everything. I think he took it very seriously and, in this case at least, took my advice. It worked out very well. It promoted this kind of a pixy look in his face.





Bishop: I later saw a picture that someone else [did]. I don't recall who did it. They had added one of these popular, short <sup>- billed</sup> build, little caps on the top of his head, which added to this jocular feeling. Again, here comes that contradiction. He's working hard on that. Yet if you let his face go into repose, it gets very, very sad. This little cap certainly enhanced this pixy feeling. In another way, it hid this pompadour type of hairdo which was a distinctive thing about him.

Riess: That seems very characteristically Slavic.

Bishop: I'll bet you're right. I haven't seen him since he won the Nobel Prize. I was glad to add that to the bottom of his picture.

Riess: Was your portrait used when he won the Nobel Prize in any ~~way~~ way?

Bishop: Yes, it was, because of the fact that these things come out very suddenly and nobody's prepared. <sup>Then</sup> The news media got a hold of him afterwards and I ~~think he~~ got a lot of pictures taken immediately afterwards.

Did I mention to you last week this New York Times thing that somebody brought in?

Riess: No.

Bishop: Some friend who reads the New York Times came in with it about two weeks ago. They were so thrilled because here was a portrait of him <sup>and</sup> a credit line to Paul Bishop, way off on the New York Times. Of course, that's a very unusual thing. Somebody was paying attention anyway. That's one of the problems that photographers have--promises of credit lines, and more often than not they don't show up.



Riess: Are there ways of making it more often than not honored.

Bishop: You can be really nasty about it. You could bring suit, I guess. Almost every picture is actually copyrighted. That's a very complicated affair. What you actually do on these, if you want, is you indicate that you intend to copyright it. That intention can<sup>be</sup> fulfilled in any delayed time. <sup>But</sup> It should carry the copyright symbol if you're going to be really ornery about it and insist. That gives a lot of complications. Publishers very often copyright their whole edition. Then they've got a copyright within a copyright. So they don't like it. But the ASMP, The American Society of Magazine Photographers, make a big issue from this. I'm not a member of it. I don't consider myself really a magazine photographer, although by the nature of my subject matter I turn up in them quite often. Probably I should belong, except I'm not much of a joiner.

Riess: It sounds like a very important issue.

Bishop: Yes, it is. I think you think of it as a courtesy. But from an historical standpoint I think it's very important. If we put a value on photography as an art form, and it's becoming more and more that way, then I think it's even becoming more important. I think this is something that will increase very rapidly in the

near future.

Riess: Yes. It really is a ~~crushing~~ <sup>Chasing</sup> issue because of all the copying

systems. <sup>9</sup> Now, Obata. He comes up somehow every week. There are two Bishop/Obata portraits, one in traditional dress and one with his brushes in front of him. <sup>For</sup> Both of them, he came to you and wanted a portrait?

*Chasing Obata, the Mylar Negative, and the Value of Prints*



Bishop: Yes, that's true. However, it's not remarkable because we were good friends and it was kind of a natural gravitation, I guess. Incidentally, the one with the brushes, I would like to think <sup>is</sup> ~~it's~~ going to become <sup>valuable</sup> because of it's scarcity. The Oakland Museum has two prints of ~~him~~ <sup>it</sup>, the Obata family has two, ~~There's~~ a fellow by the name of Gary Prather that bought one of them, and I have only two. That's all there is. The negative's no longer in existence.

Riess: Why?

Bishop: The story of that is kind of interesting, photographically. It happened to me, and Professor [Bill] Garnett up here on campus, and it's happened to a lot of us that were photographing just before the sixties, the late fifties.

This was all on what we call cut film. Cut film is a single sheet of stiff film, like a 4 x 5 or an 8 x 10, as opposed to the ~~roll~~ <sup>roll</sup> film that we tend to use more of now. This went back to the time when Dupont came out with mylar, which is a tremendous substance. Film had just gotten off the old nitrate base. (What I'm talking about is the base in the film that holds the emulsion.) About the beginning of World War II they were still using nitrate, which was very explosive and quite dangerous.

That was followed by acetate. Acetate tends to stretch. It isn't stable. Mylar came out and it was absolutely a stable plastic. Everybody thought all the world's problems were over. They went ahead-- Eastman and Dupont and those--at that period and put their emulsions on it.



Bishop: Well, this <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ fine. But starting about five years ago, including one of Bill Garnett's Guggenheim projects, we found that the emulsion was crinkling up on the film and it was separating from that mylar base. They didn't have time--well, time caused the troubles. Eastman tried it out but they didn't have this quality of time which showed them that this would happen.

In my own personal acquaintance, three of us wrote to Eastman and screamed, "What are we going to do!" We all got the same answer. They were aware of it, and there was absolutely nothing that could be done. It just went down the drain. So, a large body of work for that period, I imagine, is all gone.

Riess: In a span of several years?

Bishop: In my experience with it it went for about three and a half years. I lost a lot of work in that.

Riess: How does that make you feel ~~when you've--~~?

Bishop: You feel betrayed and angry. It's quite a loss. Obata was one of them. Frank Lloyd Wright is another one. Robert Lowell is another. Gee. Robert Frost. There's several more. I just don't recall them at the moment. There were really important things. It's just utter helplessness.

What we have now--the original prints are just going to be better <sup>-- but</sup> ~~^~~ You can make a pretty fair copy negative but it's never going to be the same. What are you going to do?

Riess: So ~~when~~ <sup>to</sup> whatever the next product is ~~that~~ comes out, ~~does that make~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~won't~~ you <sup>leery</sup> ~~very~~ <sup>leery</sup> of it? Do you have other ways of insuring against this? Do you print more, for instance, now?





Bishop: When I have something that I really feel has archival possibilities, I make six extra prints and just put them away. They're carefully washed. It is kind of as a result of that, yes. Then anything that you see around here is in addition to that. The only trouble there is you can either overdo that theory or you can underdo that theory. There's no way of knowing exactly what's going to be right at any given time. It isn't that hard. I tend to overdo it, I guess. There's going to be a lot of prints around somewhere.

An interesting thing here is that I don't think the public has any concept of <sup>this.</sup> ~~just~~ They probably just think of these prints as an unlimited supply by the artist. It isn't true. Many, many of our really great photographers have only printed maybe three, maybe four, maybe five, of their own prints from some of these beautiful negatives. It's certainly the case with Edward Weston. Now his son is printing them for sale. In the case of Ansel who's, of course, still alive, his students print them. They're carefully marked on the back. I know that Ansel feels strongly about this. There's such a mass of work in his case he can't go back and really do very many. So it's very likely that in some of the more obscure ones there may be only one or two, or three prints existant from the original.

Riess: ~~It's interesting to think about~~ the Oakland Museum, ~~then, which~~ prints from the Dorothea Lange negatives, I suppose at a fixed price so that the market never ~~fluctuates~~.



Bishop: Yes, but you see, that's a whole different thing. <sup>Of course</sup> ~~in~~ in Dorothea's case it's a little bit different, because she was never a printer.

If we want to think in terms of perfection of prints, some of the things coming out now from her negatives might be superior prints. But from a market standpoint it will never be the same as if she printed it. I'm sure the museum must mark it some way to separate it from an original.

It's a whole big thing out there.

Riess: I saw a show of Walker Evans photographs, fairly recently, in the city. There must have been at least six different designations: printed by whom; while he was living; after he had died; during various periods.

Bishop: Yes, and six different prices, undoubtedly.

Ansel is kind of trying to deal with this sort of thing now. He points out very carefully when you hear that somebody just paid \$14,000 for one of his moonrises over Hernandez that that isn't he that's getting the \$14,000. They're being sold, mostly by Witkin Gallery, or something. But they're prints that he had sold earlier.

I once heard <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ story about Picasso <sup>that</sup> ~~When~~ friends would come to borrow some money he would just put his name on a little piece of paper as an autograph and tell them to go out and sell it. It's almost like that with Ansel. If he needed money, he could make another print.

Riess: Has this whole thing been an issue that you've involved yourself with very much?



Bishop: Yes. It's kind of strange. I've reached a point in time that I don't really know how to deal with it, Suzanne. I really don't, honestly. <sup>I've</sup> ~~You've~~ spent so many years struggling. *In the early years* I was always a stickler for doing good prints and the best of my ability of interpretation of photographs. I love photography and have always been very careful with it. But all those years, really, it didn't matter too much. People were coming in not because they wanted my work, but because they wanted a portrait. That's quite understandable. In the last six or seven years I've become aware that, at least locally, in photographic circles, I guess I've become very well known, if not semi-famous. I really don't know how to deal with that.

I just had a call this morning from some young man just practically begging, can he come over and show me his work and look at mine? I'm very short of time, as you know, now. If I had no problem of time, I'd do it very willingly. This didn't happen fifteen years ago. So, in answer to your question, I guess that after all those many, many years I've been, "discovered," shall we say? I don't think the quality of my work has changed. Maybe there has just been enough of it out or something. Now people know who I am.

Riess: Well, if you had one or two of those Obatas for sale, why you would sell them at a fabulous price, wouldn't you?

Bishop: You'd have to, surely.

Riess: I mean, you feel that way about it?

Bishop: Yes. As it sits right now I'm just not going to sell them. <sup>[appreciate]</sup>. They're certainly going to ~~to~~ And the Frank Lloyd Wright.



Bishop: Frank Lloyd Wright, of course, was photographed by so many other people it's quite different. But there are a lot of Obata lovers. The one we talked about, with the feather brushes and things, is the Obata family's favorite picture. That one could be<sup>^</sup>come valuable, I guess.

Right up here's kind of interesting. Those pictures over my shoulder are Edward Weston prints that I bought from him when I was sitting at his feet. I paid \$35 a<sup>^</sup>piece for them. I'm sure they could easily be sold for \$5,000 a<sup>^</sup>piece now. What do you do? I was so broke that \$35 was a lot of money for me, too. But that was his going price. Neither he nor I nor anyone else thought in terms of buying them as an investment certainly. I just liked his work and wanted it. But look what happens!

Riess: It's nice that you have them hanging rather than in your vault.

Bishop: I haven't accepted it as a problem yet, but I have a friend who has a home in Big Sur and he has ~~some~~ pretty valuable art pieces. He's quite concerned. He's having a cement vault built in the house.

Riess: That doesn't sound like you.

Bishop: No, it isn't me.

Riess: You have a brick vault that you~~nk~~ *live in!*

Bishop: [laughter] Yes, right. But Obata, if you want to stay on that-- We never really talked about him.

One of the very early people that I met when I first came to Berkeley was Cedric Wright. One word about Cedric. I think





do! Bishop: he's worthy of a great deal more discovery than he's ever had. The Sierra Club published one book of his. He was really a fine photographer. Maybe we'll talk about him as an individual along the way. <sup>\*</sup> Anyway, Cedric came. I was considerably younger than he but we'll have to say he was intrigued by what he saw in the window. He just came in and introduced himself and told me he was a local photographer. We became very close friends. I was still in the navy. He had a son who was in the navy who was going AWOL and things like that. He'd call me <sup>To</sup> ~~and~~ see if I could do something about getting his son out of trouble, etcetra. He'd always call about six o'clock in the morning, which was a pain in the neck. Anyway, that's Cedric.

Cedric and Obata were very close friends. My first meeting with Obata was over at Cedric's house. Obata, first and foremost, <sup>I think,</sup> was a fisherman, His art / <sup>was</sup> certainly his whole life except a big chunk of it for fishing. [I] went over to this fish dinner at Cedric's. It was all on Obata. Obata was there cooking ~~the~~ fish. It was about that time that I did those pictures of him in his native costume.

~~That~~  
Then, it would have to be in the middle fifties. Is there a date?

Riess: 1951 for one of them; 1953 for the other.

Bishop: The brushes would be the '53, right?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: I thought it was early fifties. Back in that period of time  
[end tape 4, Side A]



begin Tape 4, Side B]

Bishop: <sup>Cedric was</sup> --instrumental in our meeting Peter Blos and some of these artists.

Out of the blue Mrs. Bishop and I got the idea of turning <sup>our studio</sup> ~~this~~ into a little gallery. We would have just a Saturday and Sunday exhibition of other peoples' work.

One of those was Professor Obata. The thing that is really beautiful about that-- <sup>[a show of]</sup> There had been <sup>^</sup> Roy Partridge. Maybe we'd done it six or seven times before Obata got here.

The artists were all here. As you can see, it's pretty small, but an awful lot of people came to those. Obata was absolutely outstanding by his absense. He refused to come to the show. He went fishing. Can you believe that! It was salmon fishing time and no way would he give up the fishing to just go to another show of his work.

He was very disappointed with Cal. He got caught in this thing when the war came along. He was sent to Tule Lake. He had been teaching. He was really the most outstanding person in the art department back in those years. There was a big political hassle about it. He came back from there. The family had had a little frame store and a little art store up on Telegraph. They lost all of that. Mrs. Obata got over it pretty well and their children did, but Professor Obata didn't. He carried a great deal of bitterness. Particularly so--I think it was an injustice--<sup>they</sup> ~~it~~ allowed him to retire <sup>after</sup> and all that he did, they never gave him more than an associate professorship. I think that was amended after his retirement. But at the point of his retirement, <sup>and</sup> possibly even up to the point of his death, ~~It~~ It was just one of those--/ You know campus politics



Riess: You'd think that the art department would be a little above politics.

Bishop: You would, but I'm sure they're not. It's got to have its share. Each department has such horrendous stories.

*Earl Loran ?*  
 O'Halloran was the chairman of the art department for some time. There was a big hassle because he never had an earned degree, yet he was chairman of the department. Bill Garnett doesn't have an earned degree. One person says,

"I've got mine and you don't have it."

*Medical Center Portraits: Areas of Intimidation*  
 Riess: Francis Sooy and Philip Lee. They probably go together.

They're both medical center, are they?

Bishop: Yes. Lee was the one before and Sooy, I think, is still current.

Riess: Was that the medical center needing to have the portraits?

Bishop: Yes. Sooy came as a natural result of Lee. Lee is kind of the interesting one, ~~because~~ --. I got this call from their publicity department. They wanted to know if I would do a picture of the chancellor. Of course, I would, but then this little hesitation, almost a question, "Are you sure?" [That] spurred by curiosity. I came up, "What do you mean? What's going on here?" Then came this confession that everybody in their department had tried to do him and were completely unsuccessful. And they'd sent it out. Unsuccessful. They knew about me. ~~I don't know remember who he is, but~~ this person said ~~that~~ -- he was actually kind of apologising. ~~He~~ He said he knew of my work and thought maybe they were giving me a real tough deal.



Bishop: I had never met the chancellor and thought, "Oh, gee. This is going to be bad!" It turned out so completely different.

Riess: What were the potential <sup>zz</sup>hazards here?

Bishop: As a practicing photographer I should be able to answer that directly and say there was this or that wrong with his face, or personality. The truth of my matter is that I found nothing wrong. We got along fine. We had great rapport with each other. A very, very pleasant afternoon. Anatomically, I recognized no problems at all.

I asked the chancellor toward the end of it, recognizing he had had all these problems, what it was. As I said to him, "I don't see any problems." We agreed that it was just that for some reason or other he hadn't relaxed, and had been very tense in front of the camera. On further examination, in his own department over at the medical school, apparently he had intimidated the photographers very badly.

Riess: Because he was their chancellor.

Bishop: Right. That can happen. In the last six or seven, or eight years, I seem to have shaken that off. Maybe that's because it took me that long to find myself. Now, damn it, I think I'm as good as the next guy now. Doing Frank Lloyd Wright or doing Robert Frost I felt kind of out-classed, I guess, but very interested. I think I've overcome that, but it's a very real thing.

I can remember back in the days of the navy it would always be me, as the photographic officer. We had visiting dignitaries, an admiral or something. You couldn't get by





Bishop: with sending an enlisted man to do the picture. It had to be the photographic officer. I felt intimidated then, mostly when [it was] the skipper of the station, or something like that.

I think that's what happened to Lee.

Riess: If you were photographing a great naval officer the important thing would be to have him look like a great, handsome naval officer.

Bishop: [laughter] If Yusef Karsh were doing it, I'm sure that would be it.

Riess: But when you were doing it for the navy wasn't that it for you, too?

Bishop: I got in trouble back then, too. As I went into the navy I came from this portrait studio where I was very good at flattering people, and believed that that was a good thing to do. <sup>So</sup> In my early navy career I carried that in. I was making beautiful *Bachrach-type* portraits of them and doing fine. When I went into combat, and certainly by the time I was coming out of combat, I had found my way and found my thing, — an insistence that there's something greater about the person that flattery would tend to destroy. It was only in the latter part, and all my reserve duty in the navy, when I got into these things. Fortunately, for me, at the same time I was no longer full-time in the navy. I had this beautiful ability of saying, "Well, I really don't care!" If they didn't like it I was going to pretty much do it my way anyway.

Riess: I see. That's what you mean by "getting into these things."

Bishop: Yes. I was always getting into hot water. I didn't really



Bishop: care to make this guy look like an admiral. There's a lot of admirals! <sup>Some of them -- well,</sup> When I did Nimitz, ~~it's~~ it's a very calm and peaceful picture, and I think it's the real man. You see, he was not a pompous person. There's a lot of them that are. <sup>(?)</sup>

*miss* I remember Captain Canodle, my skipper on the San Jacinto, was a Captain Bly--that sort of thing. That's a real question of ~~How~~ do you do them?

When I did Kinsey he reminded me so much of the skipper on the San Jacinto. Very much the same problems.

*The Profile and the Ego*

Riess: To stay just a minute with Nimitz, I recall that as being another of your profile portraits. Wasn't it with the telescope and Nimitz in profile?

Bishop: Yes.

Riess: What happens in a profile? That's only really half a person. *There's* ~~That's~~ considerably less revealed there.

Bishop: Suzanne, I'm not going to argue it but I think you could get yourself in a pretty good argument on that statement.

Riess: Go ahead. That's an argumentative statement on my part.

Bishop: I certainly understand what you're saying. On the other hand, that profile has quite a statement in itself. I think what actually ~~is~~ the root of your statement ~~is~~ -----and I would agree with you very quickly--<sup>is</sup> that looking full into somebody's eyes is probably the most revealing thing there can be.

Perhaps the next would be their mouth. From that standpoint, you'd be absolutely right. But from an identity sort of thing, a profile is, perhaps, more unique and will show this up more uniquely than looking into a face.



Riess: I really said that to you for the sake of argument.

Bishop: Well, it's a good one.

Riess: Because it amounts to a 180° turning away from the confrontation .  
~~with the--~~

Bishop: Yes, that's true. But there again I think we're talking about eye contact as much as anything. There is a precedent. This is terrible, comparing good portraits to police-blotter-type photography, but they do it for a purpose. Here's your straight on ; and here's your profile. They both have something very definite to say.

I don't put very much store into this chin business, but I can remember my little old mother when I'd be hanging on my chin, she'd get very upset. You're in that growing period, you know. "You're going to give yourself a weak chin." But there are people who feel that some of these anatomical features are very indicative of personality. I personally do not agree with that. I'm much more on your side. I got into this because I recognize that it's a question that could stir up a great deal of controversy. I really would say that I prefer to deal with people with eye contact.

In fact, if you were to read the average text on portrait photography they're going to stress that you have the person looking away from the camera. In TV they stress this. You get on a TV program tomorrow and they're going to probably ask you if you've done it before. If you haven't they're probably going to give you a little lecture. "First of all, don't look



Bishop: at the monitor. Second of all, don't look at the camera." Then they're going to say, "But you want to see this red light to know which camera you're on." I've always thought, how am I going to know which camera if I don't look at the camera?

I think that's poppycock. Certainly in my work I go for the eyes and the mouth and, as we've already said, the hands, as the most revealing things.

Riess: Edwin Rosinski?

Bishop: He came along with this same gang, <sup>is</sup> ~~once~~ <sup>A</sup> got started <sup>--</sup> and the pictures of Lee were just fine over there, ~~He~~ liked them and I guess that was the main thing. What I think is the most important thing here is people want to know how/<sup>do</sup>you get all of these people coming to you in the studio. This is exactly in answer to that. Rosinski was [an] assistant to Lee. When he saw these pictures he thought, "Gee, this is good." He came over. As a matter of fact, he came twice. He came somewhat later after he'd changed his image and changed his hairstyle rather drastically. In the first one it was rather short. Then his style changed. His hair got longer and he came back and did it again. Purely because, in their minds, I had done a minor miracle. ~~In my mind it was just--~~

Riess: A minor miracle with Lee.

Bishop: Yes. That was the reason that Sooy came. Everybody over there was still saying this is good. I'm not sure that that's a valid thing. Whether it's valid or not, it's the way a lot of people choose. I guess you choose a doctor if somebody says, "Oh, yes, he did a great job on me."





Riess: ~~The relationship obviously has everything going for it in that case. It's the best way to do it for that reason.~~

<sup>There's</sup>  
~~The idea~~ of a little bit of vanity there, ~~it's~~ something that I don't usually associate with men of high standing--~~that~~ just because he changes his <sup>hair</sup> and grows a mustache~~s~~

Bishop: Should I name names? [laughter]

Riess: Yes, if they're amusing.

Bishop: Are they amusing, or are they something else?

Riess: Well, I shouldn't say amusing. But make the point. I'm interested.

Bishop: Well, in both cases, if you know the people you'll appreciate the stories best.

Do you recall Dr. Egon Brunswik?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: He was a refugee from Germany. [He] was a very upright person with <sup>immaculate</sup> ~~en~~aculate clothes. Speaking of vanity, he came here--for the record, he was teaching psychology over here--he came here one morning. I'm sure that at minimum it was a half an hour that that man could not make up his mind whether he was to be photographed in a four-in-hand necktie, or was he going to be photographed in a bow tie. He would try them on. He'd look in the mirror. He would ask my opinion and pay absolutely no attention to what I said to him. I'm trying to remember which way was the final way. I'm pretty sure it was a bow tie.

Riess: I'll tell you what I wrote down. In the picture he was "eagerly leaning forward, mouth opened." I don't remember the tie. *And*

~~Bishop: Didn't indicate whether it was--?~~

~~Riess: No. [There were] rings all over the hands~~



Bishop: You started this by vanity in men. He's an outstanding example, but his was not only vanity. He had thrown in this whole psychological hassle! His controversy was he was concerned about the phallic symbolism of this crazy four-in-hand tie. He was very straightforward about it. My thoughts to myself were, "Really, what difference is it going to make?" People have been having their photographs taken more with--I'm sure that the four-in-hand's much more popular than bow ties. I think they're a terrible bother but there are men who like bow ties. Maybe they like ~~their~~ *to* fiddle. As I say, it might have been forty minutes--which is appalling in a way--just to make that decision! You say, "My God, this guy is teaching psychology!"

Riess:

There was something about the chair, too. The whole thing was just so--

Bishop: He was absolutely dictating to me the terms of the thing. That's kind of good too. That's a darn fine portrait, a very revealing portrait. In your notes you've already detected it. It shows that it was revealing, or this wouldn't have made that impression on you. <sup>Q</sup> So here again, as I would stress, one of the cardinal things about portrait photography is learning to just open up your camera and let these people climb in instead of--remember I was talking about don't swarm over them, don't try to be the director. Try to be the receptor. Be there for this to come to you as the photographer. You don't let the flow flow from you to them. You create a situation where the flow comes from them to you.



Bishop: That's a perfect example of it. Here's the man, and I didn't have to do much other than open up the camera and let him climb in.

[story]

This one, now, is a very recent one. I'm sure you must have heard of Melvin Calvin. ~~He's Nobel-Prize-winner~~. He's a Nobel Prize winner. Professor Seaborg had come in as a customer, to have his portrait done. I said that there were some other Nobel Prize winners that I really would like to do. He took a real interest in it. He suggested ~~that~~ Alvarez and Calvin, <sup>[come in]</sup> and took the initiative of calling them [and telling them] this photographer down the street would like to do their picture.

It's kind of funny because most people that I do really like their pictures. In the case of Alvarez, Mrs. Alvarez called, was very polite, very nice, and said what a good time the professor had had here, but how disappointed he was in the pictures. Actually, I think it's a great picture of Alvarez. But I didn't put it in the show, out of respect to them.

Calvin came down. Wow! Talk about egotism! You could just feel the aura of it coming as he came in. We had a great time. I was really feeling I was doing some really good pictures. He got very intrigued with these slide things of mine--the multi-media thing. We got to talking about that and I offered to show it to him. At that point he said, could he just call Mrs. Calvin down? She had been doing pictures in South America and she would like to see these very much.



Bishop: I spent probably an hour and a half of time to set this up and show it, wait for her to get here and all of this. I put a big investment of time in this whole operation. I did up these proofs and sent them to him. I wasn't charging him for this or anything. And I got this letter. One of these beautiful things. You think you're really doing great. You're on top of the world, and everybody loves you're work and loves you. After all of this--and we'd had such a pleasant time here--I get this letter. I've since learned that this is his typical way. He just devastates students by doing it. "Dear Mr. Bishop: I find these proofs totally unacceptable." End of talk! Wow!

Riess: Oh, that is awful.

Bishop: <sup>You know,</sup> I hope some day just to get one book out. You can be sure that ~~that~~ letter with his signature will be mentioned. "I find it totally unacceptable." Not another word! Of course, I was rather shocked.

Sometimes you tear your hair and say, of all the things you could have been doing, why are you dealing with something that is totally peoples' egos, which are very unpredictable? It's the cross we bear.

Riess: Well there you are. You came up with two people. It's not as if you were making a ~~vast~~ generalization about *many*.

Bishop: No. I would say our percentage might be 2-3 per cent. That's a pretty good average.

*MacKinnon, Who Brought in Aldous Huxley*

~~Riess: You had another psychologist, Donald MacKinnon from IPAR, the personality assessment place. I guess that's what he was working for.~~





Bishop: That's another profile, too. Did you <sup>note</sup> ~~make~~ that? ~~in your notes?~~

Riess: I didn't make a note of that one. ~~I think I wasn't even that struck by it. I just wrote down that he was from IPAR.~~

Bishop: Didn't notice the profile?

Riess: No.

Bishop: What's interesting about that one is that not only is he in profile, he has a beautiful chubby little double chin down there.

Riess: <sup>I do remember.</sup> It's fat. It's really quite a fat double chin. It looks sort of inflated.

Bishop: Right. The picture, I think, holds together very well ~~even~~ though. He liked it fine.

What we didn't say about Nimitz and his profile, incidentally-- I remember why. There are negatives of him that are full face. That one--you mentioned the telescope. Actually, those were binoculars. They're <sup>huge.</sup> ~~high.~~ Those were taken off the Japanese battleship Nagata and given to him <sup>by</sup> some government official that could do that, as kind of a thank-you for what he did in the war. He was extremely proud of them. If you remember the picture, he's looking out and up over these glasses. They were <sup>[in his home]</sup> on this little thing up <sup>^</sup> on Santa Barbara where he could see the whole Bay Area. In that case, it had a significance, ~~More of~~ him looking out this window, which was very characteristic.

But MacKinnon-- <sup>✓</sup> I do not remember the exact reason for that, except to say that he had a very--as if you had pushed your hands on both sides of your face and made it slender that way ~~a~~ slender, long face <sup>✓</sup> And yet he was quite chubby. I'm sure that that was my motivation. I felt that we got a better, more pleasant picture of him doing that.



Bishop: The thing that also is kind of interesting about that picture is that I worked with light and shadow a great deal, so that that chin, even though it's there, is quite minimized. Someone, in an exhibit years back, made a special comment about that picture. I don't think I have it in writing. I might. They thought it was remarkable in that the lighting worked in such a way that even though you saw the double chin, it was not offensive.

What I remember about MacKinnon the man--we had a wonderful time. We were <sup>the</sup> the old cliché of being on the same wave length, ~~we~~ certainly were. With his advanced studies he was interested in exactly the same thing. I think I told you once before, my fascination with doing anybody <sup>their mental level, or expertise.</sup> is their mentality, That in itself is fascinating enough. But what is extremely fascinating to me is this average mentality and then these beautiful <sup>as I call it,</sup> little blips that come up, like Frank Lloyd Wright or Huxley. Those I get really excited about.

That is exactly the thing that he [MacKinnon] was studying. We got to talking about it. That is how I got to do Aldous Huxley, who was one of my early college idols.

Riess: Huxley was here visiting?

Bishop: Huxley was here as one of the endowed chair lecturers, and also submitting himself to this advanced studies thing.

Riess: The studies were the creativity studies.

Bishop: Right. He was their prime guinea pig at the time. We had a real good time. MacKinnon [said], "Let me bring Huxley in." Huxley came down here and we talked. We finally wound up doing the pictures up in Sproul Hall. That's those dark, velvet drapes you see there.



Riess: Did MacKinnon bring anyone else?

Bishop: Yes. He was the one who set it up for me to do Frank Lloyd Wright, too.  
He was one of their subjects.

~~Riess: He was? So when you talked with Wright--I know it was a strange experience--~~

~~Bishop: Oh, beautiful experience.~~

Riess: Wright and Huxley, did they reflect upon ~~this whole~~ creativity thing, since it was so central to their being here?

Bishop: [With] Huxley we talked mostly about a book--~~it turned out to be nothing~~--he had been writing while he was here and working on it.

What it was was the <sup>reverse</sup> ~~opposite~~ of the Brave New World. At least those are his words. The idea was what kind of a utopian situation we would have if, instead of almost the forced labor of Brave New

World you had a culture where everybody had come around to doing

something their very best just because of the joy that it gave them, doing it as fine as it possibly could be done, or was in your power to do, ~~being the very best job~~. All ~~their~~ material things were taken <sup>cause it's a</sup> joyous thing to do things that way.

care of much the same as in the Brave New World. But ~~their~~ they were motivated motivation, instead of being ~~sedated~~; all came from within

Shortly after the pictures he went back to Westwood, where

his home was. We're talking a matter of maybe about three months from the time the picture was taken. He was nearly totally blind. <sup>A</sup> The fire broke out. He had, I heard later, three copies. They were all inside the house and they all burned. He was physically restrained by the fire department from actually rushing in to the flames to try to capture them. I don't think he wrote anything after that.

~~Now, we might have mentioned that~~ Laura Huxley's paths and mine crossed at a later date, and she didn't even know about those pictures that I had done of him. I got some to her afterwards, which she was very happy about. Something

happened and the pictures got lost that he had gotten in *between*.  
End Tape 4 - Side B.

25 thin material  
bags were taken



## INTERVIEW #5 WITH G. PAUL BISHOP

Date of Interview: 3 June 1981

Interviewer: Suzanne Riess

Transcriber: Nicole Bouche

2 tapes, 4 sides

[Begin tape 5, Side A]

Katherine Towle: Woman of a Certain Age

Bishop: Katherine Towle? ~~There were many things about her.~~ She came  
 [for her portrait]  
 in on her own. I don't recall what her motivation particularly  
 was. Many people come in because they're doing a book, or somebody  
 is giving an award, they're making a medal<sup>all on</sup>lian. I don't think  
 any of those were the ones. She just came in as a regular  
 customer.

Riess: She was a dean of students in 1950. 1950 was when you were doing  
 so many. But she wasn't part of that Stiles Hall--?

Bishop: No. You see, there's kind of a snowball action. When you get  
 into a group like that somebody sees a picture and says, "Oh,  
 where did you get that?" It still happens. I'm sure that she  
 was not connected with Stiles Hall.

Riess: ~~This portrait wasn't done in the time when she was in the  
 midst of the FSM [Free Speech Movement] or any crisis.~~

Bishop: No, that came later. The thing that immediately comes to mind  
 about Katherine Towle is her mouth. If you put a picture of  
 Admiral Nimitz along side of Katherine Towle and look at the  
 mouths, they're absolutely identical. I call this the "mouth of  
 command," something like that. That mouth opens and closes, and  
 there's no monkey business in between. Her mouth is just set  
 that way. No discussion. This is the end of it.





Bishop: Not to say that she's a hard lady. What's fascinating to me, ~~is~~ because I really enjoyed my military career, independent of the actual warfare, I ~~have several cousins~~ liked the military life. I have <sup>and things like that,</sup> several cousins that went <sup>through academies</sup> I've always been fond of it. <sup>the Naval Academy</sup> Of course, she was the commandant of the women's marine corp during the war. So we just hit it off immediately, right away, I think having a great understanding of each other.

Riess: So her commanding presence was not a problem.

Bishop: It was no problem to me at all. We got along just fine together. Very dignified, very intelligent woman.

Another thing that's interesting about that picture. You notice there are very large beads. Those beads were probably a little in excess of three-quarters of an inch in diameter, around her throat rather up-close. Women of that age group tend to be kind of touchy about "crepy tissue" around [there]. So, many of them come in with scarves. She came in with these ~~huge~~ huge beads. At least in my book that obviously means that she did it on purpose, and effectively covered a little tissue there.

Riess: You haven't mentioned mouths before as strong characteristics, <sup>indicators</sup> like hands and eyes.

Bishop: I would think they're very revealing. I guess I've been sensitized to them. We've made reference a couple of times to the studio I had before the war. I was pretty young. Those were the early days of people like Marylin Monroe. I've forgotten all of the glamour girls of the day, but it was always that pouty lower lip. I guess it is now, too. It's coming back to that. I had built up a pretty successful thing of doing just that kind of picture before the war--pretty girls with pouty lower lips.



Bishop: I pretty much rejected all of that. Maybe I don't talk about mouths as much as I should for that reason.

"Smile," Alex Sheriffs and Charles Durlake

Riess: Do you ever say to people, "Smile. How about a smile?"

Bishop: No. That's a very dangerous thing. The whole admosphere here is built around getting people to relax and feel as far away from actually having their picture taken as you possibly can. Hopefully it's kind of a homey room. The pictures ~~are~~ here. They probably think ~~they're~~<sup>are</sup> here for display, ~~of~~<sup>do</sup> I get this picture or that? Actually, they're not. They're here because I dearly love them. They're here for me rather than for the public. The fireplace and all is meant to be comfortable. That has a meaning. My insistence that people come in and see the work, or at least come in and let me see them before the sitting, Part of that is so that they don't come through that door as a stranger. It's all built in getting them to relax and be themselves.

How does that tie in with saying "Smile?" <sup>My</sup> ~~I~~ feeling is that the minute you tell the subject to do anything, even moving hands, look this way, look that way, smile, you immediately bring them back to the fact they're having their picture taken. I know it sounds preposterous, but that's the one thing you are trying to keep them so far away from. I use this flash that goes off. I know I'm successful when they really jump--they're startled--when the flash goes off. Heaven only knows what we're talking about, but we're talking about something. And I really am paying attention to what we're talking about. AT the same time I've pretty well trained myself to have a dual purpose



Bishop: there. I'm talking and I can take the picture and see it at the same time. They almost feel, "what happened?" "I thought we were talking about anything except having my picture taken?" That, as against saying, "Gee, we better get a smile here."

Riess: I would never expect you to do anything quite that blatant, <sup>then</sup> But some people are just always in animation. ~~If you achieved a great state of relaxation it may be very different.~~

Bishop: I have a set of proofs over there I have to deliver this evening to a young fellow who wants to get into TV broadcasting. There's thirty-six exposures there. The problem was, with all that I have told you, he's just over-animated. I imagine that two-thirds of those, probably, are going to be rejects because he's over-animated. He was going so fast that I couldn't keep up with his timing. I was always just missing the picture. The expression was gone before my <sup>synapses --</sup> ~~sinap--~~ where a nerve doesn't go to the brain, it just bounces off your spinal cord? I guess that's what you're working on. It should be very rapid between an eye and a hand. In his case I missed a lot of them. I, hopefully, have got some good ones.

This is a very, very rapid process. Coupled with the fact of a thousandth of a second exposure

My feeling, getting back to the smile, is that conversationally you can just about <sup>bring out</sup> anything you want, depending upon the subject matter. Then it comes out more naturally. Unless you're a real pro and somebody tells you to smile, all of a sudden you forget how to smile. You go through something else other than your normal smile.



Bishop: I do want to add a little bit more about Katherine Towle.

Way back when Chancellor Bowker was coming to Berkeley, they had an exhibit of mine, "Memorable Mentors."

Riess: At the Faculty Club.

Bishop: Yes. That was supposed to have been hung in honor of Bowker's coming. There was a reception for him and my pictures were part of the decorations of the reception. She was in that. Of course, this is after she had had the big problem with Mario Savio in the '60s. She was in pretty ill health, but she made that whole journey down to the campus. I guess she'd had a stroke. She went to all this physical effort to come down and thank me so much for putting her picture in that show. I thought it was awfully nice of her. I felt so sorry for her, being left kind of holding the whole University together. She was dean of the University at the time of the Free Speech thing. This little controversy about card tables out on the Sproul Hall plaza. She said, "No" and they said, "Yes," and the whole thing came down around her ears.

Riess: ~~Well, her's~~ and a few others! But it's true that she probably felt it strongly.

Let's talk about Alex Sheriffs, ~~[chuckle]~~ speaking of controversies.

Bishop: Do you know him?

Riess: I know a little bit about him, yes.

Bishop: [laughter] I'm sure he was in the psych department.

Riess: Yes. He looked really quite handsome--fascinating picture. It's really very nice.





Bishop: You saw the picture?

Riess: Yes.

Bishop: Okay. I think it's a good picture. Now I have to tell you the story. You've got to keep in mind this is an educator in psychology. He came in on his own. We worked and we had a wonderful afternoon. I thought, "Gee, they're great." The whole series, I thought, were really good.

What I'm trying to do is <sup>reveal</sup> ~~real~~ people. I always think -- I'm not trying to show an evil side<sup>n<sup>d</sup></sup> if there's a choice I would quickly throw that side of it out. It exists, but I'm not really interested in that side.

Well, I make up this beautiful set of proofs. He comes in and he stares at them and looks at them. I guess, maybe, it seemed like an eternity but it might have been as much as ten minutes not saying a word! He looked at them and jumped up and tossed them down on the table. His comment was: "They're terrible! You have uncovered all of these things I've spent years and years trying to put aside. You've shown every bad aspect of my nature."

I was pretty devastated. I really thought it was quite a good picture. As far as he was concerned, that was the end of the transaction. I let it go at that. I think I mentioned I had a recent one of these. They're very seldom but every now and then you get put back on your heels by something like this. I think I mentioned that Calvin did it recently.



Riess: So Sheriffs never accepted it?

Bishop: Never. I didn't charge him. I did keep the negatives and pictures. I think it's a very good picture of him. He went on to greater things.

Riess: Somehow it's the other side of the coin of what you were talking about with Derl<sup>l</sup>th. You talked about that off the tape and I think that's a very interesting story also. Why don't you tell that.

Bishop: Derl<sup>l</sup>th was one of the ones done for the Cal Monthly. Back in 1950 each issue had one of my portraits on the cover. For the record, I had nothing to do with selecting who was going to be on the covers. The editor, I presume, was the one that selected them. I bring that up because a little thing like that caused quite a little stir [among] some of the people. "Why wasn't I included in this?" You'd like to think they're above that, but they're really not.

Anyway, Derl<sup>l</sup>th came at the appointed time. I did him the way I saw him. I neglected to mention about that series of pictures [that] I was using 5 x 7 cut film. I was very, very broke at the time. So was the Alumni Association, I guess. So, their budget was absolutely minimal and mine was even worse. That was the old days when I would set up the picture with a lightbulb in the reflector. It would be about a 100 <sup>watt</sup> lightbulb. Then <sup>you</sup> ~~you~~ <sup>l</sup>you'd reach up and unscrew this hot lightbulb and turn off the power, screw <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ a flashbulb in [in] between each exposure. <sup>2</sup> ~~You~~ <sup>2</sup> you got a lot of burned hands in those days.



Bishop: The point of all this was it turned out that I budgeted three sheets of film for each head. With the exception of ~~all~~ Ira B. Cross I stuck to that. So, I did three pictures of him [Derleth]. They were straightforward--he was looking straight on at the camera-- and they were very good. I thought he had a very interesting face. He liked the pictures after he saw them and approved the one for the cover. Then

91 I found out later that his secretary was supposed to have called me and inform<sup>ed</sup><sub>me</sub> that I was to only do him in profile-- because he had worked on the Golden Gate Bridge and gotten involved in some sort of an injury which had left one eye with the eyelid drooping somewhat. I've forgotten now which eye. He was very sensitive to that and had instructed his secretary whenever he was to have a picture made she was supposed to tell them. Either she failed to make contact, or forgot about it. In innocence, I went ahead and did him straight on. I guess he was so sensitive he didn't mention it during the sitting. He just submitted to what was happening to him. I think the beautiful part of it is that he accepted that and used the picture sort of as his official picture.

Riess: So you really gave him a new lease on his own face.

Bishop: Yes. That's a good way to put it. I thought it added to his character. You can see ✓ the little bit of a droop, but it looks good.

Riess: Your story about Sheriffs is fascinating. If anything, he looks intense and interesting.



Bishop: Whatever he saw was not apparent to me, obviously.

*August Vollmer*

~~Riess:~~ Fascinating that he saw it. Vollmer is on my list, August Vollmer. You did a portrait of him back when?

Bishop: I think that was done for the Stiles Hall group. I don't know whether your dates confirm that but I think it was.

Riess: It's one of the ones that isn't dated.

Bishop: Oh. I should do something about that. August Vollmer. I go back in Berkeley a long, long time. Years ago, when I first started in photography right after I got out of school, I got the idea of doing a thing ~~I was into portraiture and had~~

~~a portrait studio of sorts, but I knew that~~ <sup>on</sup> our traffic control boys [crossing guards] <sup>[traffic control]</sup> ~~you know, the little kids in~~ <sup>I knew that was</sup> ~~the grammar schools~~ <sup>So</sup> were a unique Berkeley idea. <sup>1</sup> I at one

time tried to do some editorial work and prepared this story for the old Life magazine, which was never published, but

~~That~~ was my first encounter with August Vollmer. <sup>He</sup> ~~she~~ had been the originator, I guess, of this whole idea. I say "I guess" because I never heard of it completely resolved.

He claimed he was. There were other people who said he wasn't.

What this was was the little traffic boys with yellow hats and red sweaters.

~~Riess:~~ Right, the crossing guards.

~~Bishop:~~ It turned out many, many years later that my son was one of those when he went to grammar school.





Then I remember -- I guess part of that was the old semester system, more time for monkey-business.

Bishop: In those early days, and even when I was on campus, there used to be this rush on theaters. A whole mob of students would come down to the old United Artists, come in, and take over. Vollmer had to deal with that. Those were the days when Berkeley had almost a nationwide reputation as the finest police force.

Another interesting thing that got into a lot of controversy, and made me love old Vollmer all the more, I guess -- those were the days when the cops that wanted them had trained dobermann pincers that rode in their cars, <sup>with them.</sup> The idea of that dog wasn't to harm the public, really. I thought they were a great idea. If you had a dark alley situation the dog was sent in. It was kind of tough on the dog sometimes, but it did very often save a man. In their wisdom later on they did away with them. I think it was a very good thing. I have always been a lover of dobermanns and have had three through the years. A daughter of mine still has one now, and has had two others before.

Riess: Did Vollmer have that "command quality" that you think of with Nimitz and Towle?

Bishop: No. He wasn't a Nimitz or a Towle. He was a very gentle and very nice person. Nimitz was a polished gentleman. I'm sure that Katherine was a polished lady. But you could tell that they were very--you know. They walked absolutely straight, hardly a <sup>curve</sup> ~~curvature~~ in their spine. They just had that thing that you call the "incontroversial [sic] command"--this is it! Vollmer was a guy that would sit across the desk and very nicely discuss something and hear both sides of it. He was



Bishop: more of an arbitrator. I think people respected him because they felt that he was so well versed in his field they wanted to do what he suggested, rather than thought they had to. I'm sure Nimitz was well-versed, too. But just looking at Nimitz there was no way you were going to say, "But I think ..."

~~Riess: So he [Vollmer] was police chief but he wasn't a chiefly person.~~

~~Bishop: Do you know much about him?~~

~~Riess: We have an oral history interviews with people all around Berkeley.~~

<sup>91</sup>  
Bishop: A family that have lived next door to him for years and years, just a couple of months ago were customers of mine. He runs the Marchant Calculating Company. He spoke so highly of Vollmer. But, you know, Vollmer created a controversy on the way he checked out of this mortal coil of ours. He was quite ill and he, very practically, decided there was no point in putting up with this pain. So he took his service revolver and killed himself. [He] did this at home. There was a great deal of controversy, of course, as you might expect. Some people thought it was a terrible thing to do, and some people thought that was a pretty smart thing to do.

Riess: It was ~~such~~ a private thing, ~~to do~~. Why does it become controversial?

Bishop: I suppose <sup>a</sup><sub>A</sub> direct answer to that would be that he was such a public figure. Most of what I would choose to call the old timers of Berkeley dearly loved him. What we might call that new wave, or whatever, that came probably felt just as much the other way. There's no doubt about it. He



Bishop: represented law and order. But he was not in any sense a harsh person. I think [he was] a very reasonable person. Personally, I'd pick his side. He probably--his wife was dead. I think there were some children somewhere but I think he figured they were on their own far enough and well enough that it was really his thing. As you say, it was his decision. Who can make these decisions?

Riess: I guess it becomes interesting because he was obviously *a symbol* symbolic of law and order. ~~This seemed like such a disorderly way to~~

Bishop: To those who are opposed to guns it just became another arrow in their quiver. "Oh ho! Look! You live by the gun and you die by the gun!" Which I think is <sup>r/</sup>rediculous.

Did you happen to hear Barbara Walters last night interview Nancy Reagan, Katherine Hepburn, Lauren Beca11?

Riess: No.

Bishop: Nancy Reagan came out and talked about the assassination attempt and gun control. ~~One of the interesting statements I just made about Vollmer there--~~ She came right out and said, "No." After ~~all~~ this attempt and everything she and her husband both feel that guns shouldn't be controlled.

~~Riess: Well, it's so predictable who even needs to hear it~~ again. -167

~~Bishop: Right. But~~ I thought that was kind of interesting, that it didn't change his mind very much. Barbara looked a little shocked.



Eugen Neuhaus

Riess: Well, now. Eugen Neuhaus. ~~I met him much later in life.~~

You ~~certainly~~ took a picture of him when it looks like he was at his peak.

Bishop: Two things stand out very much in my mind about him. One was that silly little cap he always wore around campus. His hair was very thinning. I guess he was pretty conscious of it.

Riess: What kind of a cap was it? ~~Germanic?~~

Bishop: ~~I would think it was. I was going to say English, but I bet you're more right than I am.~~ One of the old type cloth billed caps. It would look like a beret only there was a bill that's in there and the material kind of comes out over the bill, as to differentiate it from a baseball type cap.

Riess: YES. I think that's what German university students would wear.

Bishop: Right. He would wear this thing. It was a /<sup>pretty</sup> bright green, about the same color green that they have on pool tables. He insisted on having his picture taken with that.

Another man, I've forgotten his name but you may remember it, looked a great deal like him---had the same thinning hair--was the one that I did with his dog. Do you remember?

Riess: Oh, Led<sup>n</sup>icki.

Bishop: Yes. They looked very much alike. Neuhaus' face was a little rounder. ~~We~~ had a good time. He introduced me to Neumeyer. Professor Neumeyer was the head of the art department at Mills [College], and also ran the gallery at Mills. Neuhaus introduced





Bishop: me to Neumeyer and, I think, was somewhat instrumental in getting me my first major exhibition, which was in the Mills gallery. My first good one-man show was at Mills. Neuhaus was in a way responsible for that.

~~What's kind of funny about that~~. Sometime later one of the prime movers of the Stiles Hall thing was Harry Kingman. I guess he was the secretary of the thing. Bill Davis was probably the assistant at the time. Harry Kingman was a great baseball figure. A beautiful head. I'm sure he's in the collection somewhere. I did a picture of Harry with his fist kind of up under his chin and the fingers kind of doubled away. I still think it was a good one. I had it in the front window. Neuhaus walked by and, apparently, didn't approve of it. Next thing I know I get a call from Harry Kingman saying he'd changed his mind about that picture. Would I please take it out of the window?

I'm a little flabbergasted. What happened? I knew that he and his wife liked it very much. It turns out that Neuhaus had called him and given quite a critique. [He] thought that the fist just didn't look right/<sup>up</sup>underneath his chin. like that. Since he was the head of the art department, his word was law. So, you never know. Here's the same man that thought enough of my work to really being instrumental in getting me my first major show. So there are those two sides of the coin.



Riess: ~~A very attractive busybody side I'd say.~~ Actually, I took some notes on the Neuhaus. "Complicated lacing together of his fingers" struck me. And he was wearing some Indian rings. ~~He would look very arty.~~ I don't remember a cap on him.

Bishop: Maybe not. I don't remember which picture is in there.

← He made such a fuss about it that I thought I had put that picture in.

Riess: Maybe you got him back by taking that picture out.

Bishop: It exists in the files.

Riess: Anyway, it's a very elegant and artistic picture.

Bishop: In that respect, maybe it follows with the job. You remember the one of Chipp. He has the same job. His hands were very prominent in that, too. I would have used the word you used, of "interlaced." I wasn't aware of that similarity.

*Max Marshall - Back to the Beginnings*  
 Riess: ~~It wasn't simple, either.~~ Max Marshall. I know he's very important in your history. Why don't <sup>you</sup> tell about [him]. I don't know that that little story of how he was your professor has ever gotten on tape.

Bishop: No. I'm sure it hasn't I have to give him a lot of credit for me and my work. The first time I met Max Marshall I had-- I understand the prerequisite for dentistry, now, is four years, <sup>but</sup> / In those days it was two years. ~~I had everything done.~~

[End tape 5, Side A]

[Begin tape 5, Side B]

Bishop: I had my / junior certificate, as we called it in those days. But for dental school I had one more science course I had to take. So I took the Summer Session and took what was then



Bishop: called bacteriology from Max Marshall. (They call that microbiology now.) I did it up here. Although he taught in the medical center, he was up here for Summer Session at LSB.

Chemistry was one of my favorite subjects all through school. Maybe that has something to do with photography. Bacteriology just seemed like an extension of that for me. This is way before I even thought about photography. One ~~of-the~~ thing ~~that~~ was so interesting to me because we became such good friends later. I was an A student in the class. I don't think we ever dealt with any really harmful bacteria. I think he was criticizing the technique as much as anything. At the end of the class everybody had to wash their hands in a solution of mercuric chloride, presumably to take all the bacteria off your hands. I think it was probably more to impress you with the technique. You've got to be careful.

So, I was busily doing this. As I say, I was one of his better students right then, at our first meeting. Now, with my photography I find it hard to wear a ring. In those days, I was a youngster and rings were more important to me, I guess. I had this big gold ring. I didn't want to put it down and lose it so I had placed it between my teeth with ~~contaminated hands~~ what he called "contaminated hands." I'd stuck it in my mouth and then I was busily washing my hands with this ring in my mouth.

He came into the room. He believed that the important thing that he was teaching was the powers of observation.



Bishop: He did a book on it later which I did the fronticepiece for. That, above all, he wanted to teach us. He figured you could always get bacteriology per se out of a textbook if need be. So, he would ask questions on his midterms and finals like: Which way did you turn the door handle when you came into this room? His point was you should be aware of what you're doing. Actually a door handle, it turns out, will turn either to the left or to the right. But when you were a worrying student you never thought of that.

He was that kind. He was more upset by finding that he hadn't gotten the idea across--that I would do a stupid thing like stick this ring in my mouth in preparation for taking this bacteria off my hands. He really got upset. He said, "Actually, I should really flunk you in this course." We had quite a chat. I wound up practically saying, "Doctor, I'll never do it again. Just let me through." YYou know, I never would have gotten into dental school if I hadn't gotten through that class. He was really upset.

That was the end of that until sometime later, in dental school. I wasn't even aware at that time that he was there. Lo and behold, I guess it was<sup>'11</sup> my sophomore year over there--  
 You don't pick your curriculum at dentistry, ~~that's~~ just laid out<sup>--</sup> ~~Now~~ <sup>was</sup> it's time to take bacteriology and I go marching in<sup>and</sup> There's Max Marshall, teaching it. I recognized him immediately. I introduced myself to him later and reminded him, and said, "I will try to do better in your class this time."





Bishop: He had started a thing that I have used in my teaching ever since. It's the greatest idea. He was the first one to show me. Over here, on this campus, in my first meeting he got all the students outside. He had a <sup>Leica</sup> ~~Leica~~ 35mm and he took a picture of each student. Then he made notebooks of that. I went back many years later to visit him and he pulled his notebook out and turned the page. He had me

down for both classes I'd taken from him--his little notes. <sup>Q</sup> I thought it was a great idea. I do it to this day. Every new class I photograph them and put them in my notebooks. Anything pertinent about them is in the book.

Riess: The photograph is for what purpose?

Bishop: Perhaps he, as I, just happen to have very good recall.

I'll just pick this one at random. [<sup>Goes</sup> ~~has gone~~ to bookshelf to get notebook!] If, for instance, this student were to call for a recommendation or something, I could just look him up. In a very short time I have memorized every name of every student in the class this way. It gives me great recall. So I've done it all these seven or eight years.

That was the first thing. I didn't pay much attention to the photography. About this time, during the time I was taking that second class in bacteriology, I was given my first \$1 Brownie camera. I got very excited about it. It was love at first sight -- <sup>which I believe in, ~~any~~ by the way!</sup>

Riess: You <sup>hadn't</sup> ~~really~~ had camera experience before that?

Bishop: No. This was just a cheap \$1 Brownie. In those days it was a <sup>22#</sup> ~~1~~ for ~~of a~~ <sup>the</sup> camera. It just was immediate. I went out with this cheap little camera and took some pictures of some of the people around the campus. I was so thrilled.



Bishop: So, I went in. When you think about it, it would be like somebody coming in with a dollar Brownie or an instamatic right now and saying to me, "Hey! How do I use this thing?" I'm afraid my advice would be go throw it right in that garbage can.

Max was more tolerant. I went in to him and started talking to him about photography. He was a very fine photographer. That grew into a great friendship. Even though I finished that course, he became my father-figure over there. Every time I'd get in trouble I'd run to Max.

There came this time when I knew that I wanted to be a portrait photographer. I knew I didn't want to be a dentist. I didn't know what to do about it or how to bring this about. So I would go and have coffee with Max Marshall. As I say, he was very benevolent. We kept up this friendship. He's now in a resthome and quite elderly. He didn't make it to my last show. But he's come to every other one.

His statement, finally--the operative sentence--was that I would at best be a mediocre dentist, and he felt sure that I would be an outstanding photographer. "Go do it!" Of course, if my parents had found that out they'd have probably gone over and I don't know what. They were so upset when I finally told them I was leaving. But, he was the prime mover.

There were two things <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ my career there. I went over and was seeking his encouragement. It was almost as if he was feeding me part of his life. I was quite desperate about it. I wasn't



Bishop: a disobedient child. I was very respectful of the fact [that] my parents had done without an awful lot to get you through an expensive dental school in the days of the ~~big~~ Depression. I also was ornery enough. I just knew inside I had to do it my way. That's my only real claim to fame--I've done it my way.

Riess: In brief, how is it that you hadn't laid hands on a camera until then? What indications were there for all of those twenty years preceeding that you had a knack for--the creativity--that's got to be part of it?

Bishop: Latent creativity was probably one of the main things that got *me* ~~be~~ into dental school in the first place. I spent a couple of afternoons with one Doctor MacFarland. That's not Jean MacFarland, it/<sup>was</sup> her husband. That has since been dissolved. He asked questions. It was before the Stanford-Benet test.

Riess: He was a psychologist?

Bishop: Right. It was <sup>trying</sup> ~~primed~~ to determine where I should go. I was just out of high school. All I knew was that I believed in higher education. I have a sister who is eight years older who had been through there. She's the one that got me pointed over into his office.

Spatial relationships. I took this test with the navy when I applied for my ~~commi~~ssion. I went off their charts on that. That's kind of an interesting ability. I think it's like saying if  $2 + 2 = 4$ , then  $4 + 4 = 8$ . I guess it isn't quite it, but it seems that way to me. I've been able to, out of nowhere, build two very successful houses. Literally built <sup>at</sup> ~~and~~ them by just sitting there and looking <sup>at</sup> ~~and~~ the ground for three or four days, then just drawing out a pencil sketch and making the house to fit the pencil sketch.



Bishop: I can do this with repairing an automobile, too. I can just look at the situation and say this has to go this way, and that goes that way. That was probably my most outstanding trait.

~~Pre-visualization: A New Wife and Home~~

Ansel Adams calls that same thing pre-visualization.

Where this ties into to photography <sup>-- I think</sup> ~~[is that]~~ to really do photography and do it well, the last thing that comes into the image-making process is the camera. So many people you see going around looking through the camera looking for a picture. The point--I'm sure Ansel and Imogen would agree--[is that] you see that picture in your mind, first, and then you make the camera come up with what you saw. Ansel put the word "pre-visualization" upon it.

You actually do. If I were thinking of doing your portrait I would, looking at you now, have a complete and total image in my mind of what this finished print was going to look like. Then I would bring all the lights and camera. The camera would probably be the last thing of all that came into it.

That, apparently, was there from heaven knows where. The camera came absolutely suddenly. I don't know even what motivated <sup>Boschetto,</sup> George ~~Peixotto,~~ a school friend, who gave it to me. It might be he had a dollar in his pocket for a birthday present. It came out of the blue that way.

But I don't think this is entirely unheard of in the field of art. (Jo Davidson), the sculptor, ~~that at the time of President Roosevelt was on top of things~~. His story went very much the same. At some point, very suddenly, he put his hands into wet clay. [He] hadn't even thought about it before. He just started playing with this wet clay. It's almost a chemical reaction.





Bishop: It doesn't seem strange to me but it does to a lot of people. I've been married twice. The first time we were quite young. She was an art student at Cal. We went our divergent ways. But the second time I was married, thirty-six years ago, the same thing happen<sup>ed</sup><sub>^</sub>. I happened to look through a restaurant window and saw her on the other side. I just knew it. I just felt it. "This is the girl I'm going to marry." It took a little while to meet her and persuade her I wasn't crazy, but there was no question in my mind.

Riess: Are you saying that you had pre-visualized this person?

Bishop: I don't say that I had pre-visualized. No. But the minute I saw her, it was a clear-blown thing right then. It was almost fait accompli except she didn't know anything about it. I don't know what that means but to me it's a pretty common experience. This very building would be very much the same way. A little different but almost the same sort of thing.

Riess: You mean the building that we're in now?

Bishop: Yes. Well have to talk about it. I really think that it's an important thing.

Riess: Why don't you finish that idea now.

Bishop: There's kind of a funny thing I knew I left out with Max Marshall. At the same time I was listening to his every word, trying to get courage enough to make this break--there are times when you have to make very definite decisions in your life. That was one of them and I've never regretted making that decision. I think it was the right step forward. <sup>Q</sup> At the same time I was listening to



Bishop: Max over in San Francisco, I 'd come back to Berkeley. It was the time that King Edward had just abdicated his throne because of Wally Simpson. His abdication speech was put on an old 75rpm phonograph record. I would sit there [with] this old windup phonograph and listen to his abdication speech, and listen to it over and over again. I can almost hear it in my ears now, ~~The~~ chiming of old Big Ben ~~and~~ -- ✓ I don't know why it took me so much build-up to make that decision? <sup>but</sup> My mother reacted so badly. Everytime we'd pass in the hall she'd burst in tears. That went on for two or three weeks. She was definitely the matriarch of the family, you see. Wow! That was a problem.

Riess: It was just your older sister and yourself?

Bishop: Yes. My older sister and my mother were real buddies. Eight and a half years later--I might not have been planned <sup>/parenthood</sup> ~~[laughter]~~.

Riess: You were not pre-visualized.

Bishop: [laughter] I don't think I was pre-visualized.

Riess: ~~I think~~ it's interesting that you went to see Mac Farland ~~just~~ to get a kind of clue. ~~That seems like an unusual--~~

Bishop: It turned out that I was very good with my hands. My best subjects are contradictory: chemistry, biology, and high school physics. Anything that wasn't very wrapped up in mathematics. If you think of them in the terms of now, they're practically all math. But in those days they weren't. I was weak in mathematics. I was very good in English and history. So he had to deal with that weak in mathematics thing.

<sup>It's</sup> ~~That's~~ kind of interesting <sup>that</sup> ~~when~~ I <sup>actually</sup> got my commission in the navy; ~~They're~~ very high in math, but they're also very high in English. I think it was my better than normal ability, at least in



Bishop: English grammar, that got me the commission. I got off the subject.

Riess: Way, yes. Would you please tell me about this house. How it fits in? You were saying that it's a piece with the same idea.

Bishop: I got this "Dear John" letter as my ship was leaving Hawaii. There was a whole dissolution of a studio that I thought I was coming back to. In the scheme, having discovered what I wanted to say about people, it wouldn't have fit in that old context, anyway.

Riess: The old context of your gussied-up studio.

Bishop: Yes. The pouty lip sort of thing. <sup>Q</sup> Something happened overseas to <sup>at a certain point in time there,-- and</sup> me. All of a sudden--I've got two pictures <sup>which</sup> you probably haven't ever seen that were taken aboard ship ~~and~~ were the beginning of all this sort of work--I got this real conviction, <sup>Q</sup> Now, I know what I'm going to do the rest of my life. I'd been doing photography, but I'd been doing it without a rudder. <sup>And</sup> I <sup>though I hate this word,</sup> guess my pictures are absolutely, repetitious, I hope in this one thing, <sup>^</sup> that above all they're trying to show what I call this little golden thread of ~~that golden thread~~ beauty of the intellect of human beings. The potential of our mind, to me, is the most fascinating thing there is. I just set out to show that side. (That's why I get excited about somebody like Frank Lloyd Wright or Aldous Huxley.)

That came as a very firm conviction. I knew this was what I was going to do. To do that right, I felt that retouching and the sort of work that I had done before just wouldn't do it. It would be falsifying it. ~~and that's why I quit.~~

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*(And this was overseas, still fighting with Japan.)*

Bishop: I had misgivings, <sup>Q</sup> But something else happened. There was a

strength that came along with it.

*We didn't really use the word meditate in those days, as we do but nevertheless* There were these long periods of very little to do [at sea]

but entertain ~~your~~ <sup>my</sup> own thoughts. I would half transe-like,

half in and half out of focus, think about this and what's

*Realizing that I was coming back to a very real problem, and* going to happen, <sup>A</sup> In a sort of way, asking something bigger

than I, or outside of me, to help out in solving this problem.

<sup>Q</sup> I have to honestly say at no time did I contemplate

divorce. I simply felt something isn't right and something's

got to be made right. I had nothing to do with that. It came

as a surprise, certainly as a shock. *(In hindsight, I realize maybe I did have more to do with it than I could see at first.)*

<sup>Q</sup> Something, I like to think, took <sup>bigger than I,</sup> a hold. It worked out

fine after the shock of it all. She went her way, with the studio

and the whole works, and I went my way. <sup>Q</sup> Then Right as this divorce

was coming down, when I should have been really terribly shy of

*Positive, "this is it!"* this sort of thing, is when I saw Luella. Now, this all comes

together.

<sup>Q</sup> While I was trying to convince Luella that "as soon as we get this divorce we're going to get married," I was also having

to look for the studio or someplace to start up again. She'd

get off work and we would just go everywhere looking for a

studio. I think I had \$300 to my name at the end of that

divorce. That was money I'd brought back from overseas with me.

I had told her one thing I needed was wheels. So I'd taken the

car and what money I had in my pocket, and gave her all the

<sup>Q</sup> rest. We would tramp all over. I went up to Redwood Park.





Bishop: In complete desperation--where can we find a studio? In the back of our minds [we were] thinking, where do you go to rent a studio. I had never done anything but that.

One afternoon we wound up on Grizzly Peak. In desperation we just sat there and looked out over the Bay. "If I could have a studio anywhere I wanted it, where would it be?" I took a map out of the glove compartment and made a little circle. Lo and behold, the circle was pretty much right around the campus. Just like that the thought came to my mind, ~~while~~ we were on campus they were building a little building somewhere just below the campus. I didn't remember the street or anything else. But I had walked by while they were actually building this building.

So, ~~I thought~~, "Gee. It had a fireplace in it, a staircase in it. What a great little building that would be." ~~WE~~ came down here <sup>and</sup> ~~are~~ started looking around. I had remembered it as being on Bancroft. Finally [we] got over here, another street, and found it here on Durant. It was occupied. It looked like a beautiful building from the outside. It was being used as a residence by a woman whose husband was a major in the army and still over in China, or something like that.

I went to a realtor friend and said, "Could you just find out if there's any possibility of getting <sup>into that</sup> ~~building?~~" He misunderstood and thought I meant buying that building. He got into it and got a hold of the lady who owned it--not the one



Bishop: that was living in it--a Mrs. White. Mrs. White had been doing battle with the woman who was in here. She had a little baby grand and these brick walls were frosting--taking the finish off--her baby grand. They were bickering back and forth, <sup>and</sup> ~~you~~ <sup>we</sup> were in rent control then; Well, it was worse than that, No way could you evict the wife of somebody overseas. Mrs. White, in desperation said, "Oh, I'd gladly sell it to you."

That was really wild. Lu had a thousand dollars she had saved in silver dollars. I had approximately \$300. So I wrote to this aunt of mine and said, "I could sell the car, but could you possibly loan me a little money to make the down payment on this building?" I told her I needed to keep the car. She wrote back this letter that I was absolutely unprepared for. "I felt I had done nothing significant to help out the war effort. You've come back and you've done your part. Now, let me do my part. I will buy the building and then you buy it from me."

~~Riess:~~ How elegant.

~~Bishop:~~ She would have me borrowing the money from her, in effect. That is the way it happened. [We] finally paid the dear old lady off. That's how we got the building in the beginning.

But the point here is , it was almost what I would call another form of that pre-visualiztion. I think that's one of the most important contributions that I could give to younger photographers. If you get the horse in front of the cart, if absolutely you have something to say, you have an importance in your work, then all these other things have a way of following. I don't know whether it's supernatural or natural, or what. But



Bishop: I know we came to where we are from scratch and photography has been very good to us. ~~I do think that of all things, importance. Let this other be added on to it.~~ <sup>91</sup> Does that still deal with pre-visualization?

Riess: Good story.

Bishop: I think it does. I think it's just like the camera.  
[tape interruption]

Riess: I noticed in talking about Deutsch that the format of the picture is very similar to the format that you used in the Nimitz portrait. ✓

Bishop: They were taken one right after the other.

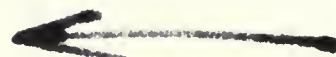
Riess: You were starting to say <sup>Deutsch</sup> he had a whole floor of--

Bishop: Yes. Over on Lakeshore Drive, on Lake Merritt. It was beautiful. We did him in his study upstairs. I remember he had just done a book about Queen Willamena of Holland and was very proud of the book. I think it's in his hand, or it's on his desk in front of him. The reproduction on the back of the book was a reproduction of the Dutch crown.

They used to have a size in photography called 6 1/2 x 8 1/2, a film size, which they haven't made in years and years. That was done when they were still making 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 film. It's single sheets of film. This big box camera and everything up there.

The thing about Deutsch was, as fine a man as he was, he had a very receding chin. [491 - 495 obscured by mechanical noise on tape] . I'm not sure this is right but there was a time in

Andy Lawson, George Adams, David Barrows, Alva Davis, Stephen Pepper, Benjamin Lehman, James Hart, Jacob Geiger



Bishop: thinking that a weak chin was supposed to denote a less than strong character, which I think is a bunch of balogna. At the time, I guess I paid more attention to that. He had beautiful hands--very tapered fingers and well-manicured nails. But he had this very dark hair clear up on the back of his hands.  
[end tape 5, side B]

[Begin tape 6, Side A]

Bishop: He had this beautiful black hair on his forearm and clear up into his fingers. Very masculine looking. What I did--and I thought it worked out beautifully and still works even though I don't think so for the same reason--I got this hair very naturally up on the point of his chin. Here's this beautiful hand with these tapered fingers, and this curly black hair, completely covering up this chin. I would recognize [that] as a very difficult feat to come off and have ~~it~~ look right, even now. Hands are very hard to deal with. They can look so artificial. That one came off just beautifully.

As I say, when a snowball gets to rolling, it keeps rolling. It was Deutsch <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ suggested that I do the Board of Regents individually. He liked his picture very much and said, "We need up-to-date pictures of the Regents." I got started on that project.

Riess: Yes. What happened to that project?

Bishop: Do you remember John Francis Neylan? You probably know of his characteristics and things. Needless to say, a very adamant man. I think I did four regents. I don't recall their names now.





Bishop: One of them, of course, was Nimitz, whom I'd already done. Number five was Neylan. I made an effort to try to make this appointment. That was the first wind he had gotten [that] this was coming down. <sup>9</sup> He called back over <sup>here</sup> ~~hear~~. As I recall, it was Miss Robb that got a hold of me and told me that this was all off. So it must have gone through President Sproul's office. <sup>9</sup> I [asked], "What did I do wrong?" It wasn't that I had done anything wrong. Neylan absolutely refused to have an up-to-date picture taken. He had been using the same one for twenty-five years. So much so it looked like Herbert Hoover in the pictures. The thing that was outstanding was they used to wear celluloid collars. Characteristically the knot of the tie would be about half way down in the middle of the collar. In this day and age we wear the knot up to the top of the collar. In those days it was half way down. That was it. No more. He killed the whole idea just like that. He refused to have his picture used, and he had enough power to say it was a bum <sup>✓</sup> idea anyway and funds could be used for more useful things. I was out.

In that same respect of people using the pictures for years and years, -another outstanding one that did that with me was Alfred Frankenstein, the music critic and art critic. Every year, for years, there would be a call and he would order six to twelve prints.

Riess: More of the same?

Bishop: More of the same that had been taken, finally, almost twenty-five years [before]. We had good fun talking to each other on the



Bishop: telephone. Each time, "Oh, I'd better get in for another picture." Never did. Finally, he had a couple of serious heart attacks and went down hill very rapidly after that; at least visually. He was one of the most perennial re-order I think I ever had.

Riess: You have a couple of pictures of people who seem to be well into their maturity, Joel Hildebrand and Andy Lawson. Hildebrand, of course lives on.

Bishop: He's just about to reach one hundred now. I hope somebody's going to do something about that.

Riess: I'm sure that plenty will be done about it.

Bishop: Hildebrand was one of those in 1950. He was on <sup>one of</sup> the covers of The Cal Monthly. I had taken chemistry from Hildebrand way back in about 1934. Chemistry 1A. The textbook was Lattimore and Hildebrand. I wound up photographing both of them in later years.

The thing I remember so well about Hildebrand shows up in that picture. He has a very stubbly beard. I was quite concerned and said something to the effect of, "Mr. Hildebrand, that beard is going to show up very badly because I make very sharp and clear pictures." He said, "Well, let it!" Then he said that he had just gotten down from a Sierra Club backpack trip just in time to make the appointment, and [had] no inclination or time to go do anything about the beard. And this was the way his students often saw him anyway. So, let it be!"\*

In August of 1981 I took a portrait of Joel Hildebrand that was used on the cover of The Cal Monthly, celebrating his 100th birthday. During the sitting Hildebrand told me that the portrait taken in 1950 had been his favorite through all the years.



Riess: ~~That's a very good story.~~ Did he continue to use that portrait.?

Bishop: For quite a long while, yes. Did you see the one that Imogen did of him in her After Ninety-six?

Riess: Yes. ~~I don't remember it well but~~.

Bishop: This is the one where he's up at the blackboard. Of course, he's lost tremendous weight from the time I did him. He was always kind of stubborn. The thing that shows up in Imogen's picture is his left, upper bicuspid, I think it would be, is missing. There's this rather black gaping hole up there. I'm just sure it was the same stubbornness. That tooth came out; leave it out!

Riess: How about Lawson? I was really disturbed by not being able to see his mouth <sup>for the beard.</sup> ~~speaking of the mouth.~~ Was he smiling? ~~or was he yawning there?~~

Bishop: [laughter] Andy, Andy, Andy. I guess you're aware that Andy, at least when I was on campus doing President Sproul, was the topic of conversation in the faculty, and all of his exploits. It seems very mild now, but he was a rambunctious person that took over a self-appointed management of the campus pretty much on his own. He was forever calling Miss Robb and--  
~~I know~~ you heard the old story about the telephone thing to Sacramento. ~~I guess he just bothered Sproul.~~  
 Another one of the good <sup>stories</sup> ~~ones~~ is-- <sup>[Sproul]</sup> He didn't like <sup>[Lawson]</sup>  
 telephones, and he was always argumentative anyway. He got a hold of some poor little campus operator. She was having



Bishop: trouble getting the right number and he just gave her a real chewing out, had her in tears. Somebody complained to President Sproul about it. I'm sure very reluctantly Sproul encountered the lion in his den and said, "You hurt this little girl's feelings!" He [Lawson] wound up telling her, "You go to Hell" as he slammed the phone in her ear after he was giving her this bad time. She was just devastated. <sup>9</sup> Sproul said, <sup>"</sup>you've hurt her feelings very badly and you better go do something. Maybe you should go apologize to her." Lawson, grudgingly, as I heard the story, said he guessed he'd do something about it. As the story goes, he finally tracked her down on the telephone. "Are you the girl I told to go to Hell?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, don't go there."

It sounded funny at the time. That was Andy. He was something else. He lived <sup>up</sup> what in those days we called "nut hill." Most of the faculty lived up behind the campus on Buena Vista. [He] was doing battle with everybody. I think he was one of the founders of the Sierra Club. I know he was one of the founders of the Men's Faculty Club.

I encountered him on this thing of doing the alumni covers. I guess he was probably 6'4"

Riess: Andy Lawson?

Bishop: Yes.

Riess: How interesting! He looks tiny.





Bishop: Just as thin as a rail. Have you ever seen the other picture of him, where he's sitting in a chair, that I have of him?

Riess: I don't know.

Bishop: You've seen the close-up head. There's another one in the stack over here where he's sitting against that wall, which was brick then, in a little chair. The way he folds in the angles of this chair is just amazing. His height and his long bones. In some ways it's a terrific picture. but, as you've already spotted, the whiskers and all in the other one make it Number 1 .

We got along without anything going wrong. He liked the picture. The one that was used was the one you are familiar with. The large head.

He called one day. Of course, in those days our pictures were just so low, and we were so broke, I think they ~~was~~ were something like a dollar a print. He wanted some pictures. I told him the price and, very gruffly, [he said], "That's too high! You're just trying to make money off of me." Okay. That was that. I couldn't do them for any less so that was the end of the conversation.

Howard Cook called a couple of days later and said that Andy Lawson had been in and cleaned him out of all the spare copies that he had of that issue. [laughter] He was sending these covers around to his friends. I thought that was kind of beautiful. I'm sure he came from Scotch ancestry, as I do myself. That was one of the highlights in the life of a struggling photographer who never knew how he was going to make ends meet in the first place.



Riess: I think I'm glad I missed Andy Lawson.

Bishop: He might have told you something. [laughter]

Riess: Yes, indeed. How about [G. P.] Adams, Barrows, Sailor ✓ Davis?  
Anything about any of these?

Bishop: George Adams is a good one. I did him at the request of one of his students, a man who has made his millions since he got out of school.

Riess: Who was that?

Bishop: His name is Richard Clements. He's currently engaged in developing hotels in Nepal so that you only have to hike one day's hike on the way to <sup>mm</sup> Anapurna. [laughter]

Riess: Golly!

Bishop: ~~Want to shot him?~~ [laughter] He's been dealing with the king of Nepal and all this. Anyway, Dick Clements way back then didn't have much money. He was very taken with George Adams, He's the one that commissioned that. I had taken a philosophy course from him and knew who he was. George Plimpton Adams.

He was one of these people who did his lectures at the blackboard with chalk. He wrote out all of his points, ✓ practically wrote out his lecture. He was Mr. Tweed Coat Professor. I knew this. When ~~He~~ ✓ he would finish an hour's class, he would have chalk dust all over him. His little <sup>chamois</sup> ~~shammy~~ patches on his elbows would be white. He would actually rub [erasure gesture?] with his elbow.

I made the arrangement. I called him and told him that Mr. Clements wanted me to do his picture. He didn't discuss clothes or anything, which was a mistake of course. He came



Bishop: down in the neatest royal blue suit. Just immaculate, you know. I looked at him. "Oh, no!" I was faced with this problem. I knew that Dick wouldn't accept it. Dick and I had talked about how he was just dissolved in chalk dust. We both had tremendous respect for the man. I tried my best to tactfully suggest that he go back and get his tweed coat.

He was a very nice guy. I was just so embarrassed. I was stuttering and babbling. When he finally figured out what I was trying to say he said, "That's what I wanted to bring. But my wife wanted me to bring this blue suit." So, he went back. He didn't have any chalk dust, but we did get him in the tweed jacket which was Dr. Adams, for sure, as the students remembered him.

Riess: David Barrows was another profile. Such a strong profile, too.

Bishop: Yes. I don't consider myself that kind of person, but I guess I was a good naval officer in my day. I had taken ROTC all through high school. After the war I must have changed personality, but I was very sensitized to it and had quite a respect for it.

Well, here comes in General Barrows. He was very tall, a very dignified, English looking man. There wasn't a hair on his head that was out of place. If you remember, Andy Lawson and some of those had eyebrows that wouldn't quit. They were just big and beautiful, and bushy. Here was General Barrows with his very <sup>i</sup>ridg~~adly~~ clipped eyebrows.

Riess: ~~Oh! They were~~ <sup>=</sup> really clipped?

Bishop: Really clipped. So ~~outstanding and so~~ <sup>rigid</sup> ~~ridge~~, and so military. I was just so taken with him. The picture kind of shows this.



Bishop: He looks pretty ramrod and very much in command, ~~again~~.

He really had a very short tenure. He was one of the presidents of the University, but I don't think for very long.

~~Riess: Right. I think that wasn't his favorite thing to do either.~~

~~Bishop: No. I did his son later on,~~

~~Riess: Thomas Barrows, in Extension.~~

~~Bishop: He was the head of the Extension, I guess, at the time.~~

~~Riess: What was the background here [referring to portrait]?~~

~~Bishop: As I recall, I did them both--~~

~~Riess: Was it a greenhouse or something? Maybe that's not the one.~~

~~Bishop: No. There were others in a greenhouse.~~

~~Riess: Oh. Okay.~~

~~Bishop: I think both Barrows were done here. I did Tom Barrows after his father had died, I think. As I recall, Tom Barrows had had pretty serious heart attacks by the time I did him. Quite a different person. I remember feeling it just doesn't seem like the son of this man. Just different. Certainly no military hangover.~~

~~Riess: Alva Davis--"Sailor" Davis. Is "Sailor" another military person?~~

~~Bishop: Well, we could almost say that. I'm sorry to say I don't remember what brought him here, which probably means he came on his own. He wasn't part of a project. The thing that was outstanding about him was that from the time he came in-- he apparently knew just how he wanted to look--I got one expression out of him. That is all I ever got out of him. I worked, it would surely have been, at least an hour. I can~~





Bishop: recall doing everything I could think of, short of standing on my head, to get at least a change of expression. I kept shooting these negatives. I'm sure if we dug them out of the files you would get lost which one is which. They're just identical! One negative would have done the whole job.

That's a very outstanding thing. Maybe part of it was because I was relatively new at my craft. Maybe I wouldn't have cracked him even now. I guess the point is he didn't want to be cracked. He was very happy with the picture. I could have saved my time and his time. I think we've already talked about President Hitch. which was a very similar case. Except in that case I did get him to smile, which just led to further turmoil because I did. [laughter]

Riess: [laughter] Yes. ~~The smile has been a subject dwelt on.~~  
<sup>Now</sup>  
<sup>A</sup> Stephen Pepper, ~~of course, is such a sweet person.~~

Bishop: Yes. I'm not sure which picture Bancroft has of him. I hope they have two, but maybe they don't. He was done in the Cal Monthly group.

Riess: Yes. There are two portraits that came in in 1950.

Bishop: Good, I'm glad, ~~they have~~. There are two in the Cal Monthly issue. As there is in every case, there's a small picture inside and the cover picture. In all but two cases they're the same picture. One was Ira B. Cross and the other was Pepper.

The thing about this one was I had taken a class from him years before in what was called ethics. I was very taken with the man. He was a very great man. He also was a very tall man. He was somewhat over six feet, which had nothing to do with this at all. The picture on the cover of the Cal Monthly, at first glance



Bishop: you would swear that he was sound asleep. His head is kind of bowed--turned down.

Riess: I remember that.

Bishop: It would appear that his eyes are closed. The motivation there was we had talked about these things in aesthetics. The repetition of form and all of this. He was totally bald and there was this beautiful curve in his bald head. He had these little steel rimmed glasses which repeated this curve of his head. There were rhythms and the beautiful divisions of space all through that picture, and which I saw in my ground glass. This was the time when we were using three sheets of film, as I told you. I might do it now, if the occasion arose, but it would be very rare. I said, "Please, don't move. Just stay there until I can get this." In those days ~~you were~~ <sup>I was</sup> using the ground glass, which meant that each time you took a picture you had to put a film in and close up your camera. For each exposure there was a different sheet of film inserted into the camera. So, I'm having him hold all of this, not open his eyes or anything while I'm getting this all set to go.

I got that picture and then I did two more that were the conventional type where he's looking at the camera. I didn't release it. I wanted it for the cover but I told Howard Cook that we just had to check with Dr. Pepper. It did appear that he was asleep.

Dr. Pepper looked at it and he thought it was just fine. He saw what I had been talking about--these curves and everything. But he asked for this one concession. Would I mind just putting



Bishop: one where people could see his eyes on the inside.

Riess: That's a very interesting story. Good man. <sup>You</sup> ~~He~~ wouldn't have gotten that from many people, I wouldn't think.

Bishop: No. He was a wonderful, gentle man. He lived right next door to Cedric Wright, too, who was very instrumental in my younger days of photography.

Riess: Up there on <sup>nut</sup> ~~the~~ hill.

Bishop: No. You're right about that, but at the time Cedric lived down on Etna Street. It was an old livery stable.

Riess: That's where Pepper was living then.

Bishop: But you're right that Cedric did live up on Buena Vista.

Riess: No, that's Pepper.

Bishop: I guess Pepper did too.

Riess: No. It was Pepper who lived up on Buena Vista, but at the time they were both down--

Bishop: Well, then they both got on Buena Vista. I didn't realize Pepper was up there. But Rhea Wright still owns, to my knowledge, the Maybeck's house

Riess: How about the portrait of Jim Hart? It seem like he's looking particularly like an English professor, with the cigarette and all of that. Do you remember that?

Bishop: Yes. Let me just try to recall the name of his cohort, right along with him and possibly ~~was~~ the chairman just before him. You and I discussed him.

Riess: Lehman?

Bishop: Lehman. Ben Lehman. There's an interesting little story.

~~I think~~ ~~It~~ It was one of Lehman's favorite students--certainly the



Bishop: student thought that Lehman was God--that gave me my first camera. Many years later George ~~Peixotto~~<sup>Boschetto</sup> was having a birthday. I knew that he just idolized Ben Lehman. I invited Professor Lehman in to do his portrait so that I could give it to George. ~~Peixotto~~. [It's] kind of an interesting thing how these things make full circle. Nothing particularly exciting happened with Ben Lehman except it's one of the relatively few <sup>times</sup> things--James Hart is doing it again<sup>but</sup>, You'd be hard pressed to find many cigarettes. Once in a while a pipe, but very rarely.

I don't know why I do that but--

Riess: ~~In other words~~, you try to exclude them.

Bishop: I pretty much leave them out. Yes. I'm not quite sure what my motivation is there. You would see, if you really studied a number of prints, that they're very rare. With Lehman you wouldn't have gotten Lehman without the cigarette. He was just lighting from one end to the other

That picture was a huge<sup>g</sup> success. I think Lehman had maybe a little bit more than the average dose of--✓ I don't mean conceit, but he liked pictures of himself. He was very much <sup>the</sup> taken with / picture and bought quite a number. It was through that that James Hart came in as a regular customer.

A couple of years ago Ansel Adams was at the meeting of the Friends of the Bancroft. The three of us were talking, Hart, Adams and myself. Hart said, "Well, I've been photographed by the two best photographers in the world." Then he named the two of us. I thought that was awfully nice.





Bishop: He's an awfully nice man. I really should do him again. I don't know that he's changed all that much. I'm sure he has, and I like the man so much I really should just get him down here.

~~Riess: That would be nice. I think he looks much, much younger in that portrait.~~

~~Bishop: Well, he was. He was a lot younger. Did we have a date on that? It goes back a ways. He was still in the English department.~~

Riess: <sup>That was done in</sup> ~~Yes.~~ 1956.

Bishop: That's been a while. What is interesting out of that [is] this was the same time that I was doing a nice body of work with the poets of the time. Auden, Spender, Lowell and those.

Riess: Catching them when they were on campus.

Bishop: Yes. Most of those at that time were over on the San Francisco campus. It was Ruth Witt Diamont that activated that. She had what she called a poetry center over at San Francisco State. Jim Hart saw those <sup>and</sup> ~~here.~~ He asked--and I donated ~~it~~-- could they possibly have copies of those pictures to put in the ~~graduate~~ library in the English department. I asked him about a year ago what had ever become of them. He said he was sure they were all gone. <sup>He</sup> ~~and~~ had no idea. He had <sup>kind-of</sup> wanted to get them into Bancroft. ~~I told you I'd got a note from~~ <sup>v.g.</sup> I had told him at the time that I would make sure he got all those. I think he might have forgotten that I said that. I really think that when I get back this fall I'm going to get on his case again and get him over here.



Riess: ~~How about Andrew Imbrie? Does anything come to mind? It's all right if it didn't. I've got other names. We mentioned Geiger.~~  
~~[End tape 6, Side A ]~~

[begin tape 6, Side B]

Riess: Jacob Geiger. What I've written down is "another stony profile."

Bishop: [laughter] Okay. It's kind of an interesting one.

Geiger, of course, was "Mr. Public Health" himself. *He was decorated*

*by --* ~~If~~ there was any country in the whole world that left him out, I'll be surprised. He was a collector of medals. I guess he was very well known in public health <sup>because</sup> ~~He~~ literally had a large case of medals <sup>λ</sup> which will be of importance here in a minute -- *and* ~~that~~ case must have been 3 1/2 feet high and I would think it was a little bit in excess of 2 feet wide, and about three inches deep just so that it would stand when you sat it down. This was ~~absolutely this~~ cloth lined and all of these medals, medallion and ribbons and all that. Okay. Part of this is the fun of the story.

Now, we go back to Dr. Max Marshall. I told you he was the one that gave me the impetus to get out of dentistry and into photography.

Riess: Right.

Bishop: Max Marshall was a very very good friend and tremendous admirer of Dr. Geiger. He did a biography of Dr. Geiger. It was just natural that he wanted me to do the picture on the frontispiece. Marshall called and said, "I want this picture of him, but you've got a problem. Whenever Geiger has his picture taken he always wants these medals in the picture. I just want the man; I don't want the medals." Then he left me to solve my problem. As I



Bishop: indicated, he was that kind of a guy. Felt that students should solve problems. Part of your education.

So, I fussed and I worried. What am I going to do? I had known Geiger. He gave some public health lectures when I was in dental school. You said it yourself. He was a <sup>rigid</sup> ~~ridged~~ person. Beautiful shaped head but not the guy that's the friend next door. No monkey business. About as close to General Barrow's pictures as two pictures can be.

He came in and, sure enough, here comes this case. It's when I first saw the case. It had a little handle and he was carrying it like a briefcase. "Oh, I'm dead!" Incidentally, that's the only time that I ever tried it. Now, many, many years later, maybe I should try it again. But I don't know if I ever will. In that time I had just gotten started ~~in~~ being interesting in ~~taperecorders~~. Unbeknown to Geiger, I had set up a recorder and a microphone here in the room. I thought, "I'm going to record this."

To finish that little story, I got so nervous with the darn thing going, and so conscious of it, and became conscious of everything I was saying to Geiger, ~~on~~ it was terrible, because, with all reserve, one of my most important assets is I talk too much. In doing a portrait it's a very valuable tool. You lead people away from this idea that they're having their portrait taken.

Riess: But you didn't like the results of listening to yourself?



Bishop: I had a terrible time. Perhaps that led to the stiffness.  
But, to the real cute part of the story.

I was confronted with this ~~idea. Here's~~ a man that brought--<sup>✓</sup> The next thing he was going to do, I'm sure, was say, "Which one of these medals should I pin on, or which dozen of them?" I was under strict orders <sup>b</sup>by Marshall--and I was impressed with Marshall's strict orders--don't. [It was] one of those beautiful things-- it happened to me that time and it happened again with Ira B. Cross-- just happening to think of the right words that saved the day.

He was deciding what we're going to do and I had already gotten a chair out here. He mentioned the medals and just out of the blue, like heaven sent, I said, "Dr. Geiger, just this once I want to get a picture of the man that was able to acquire all these medals, instead of the emphasis on the medals."

It just hit him just right. He beamed and thought that was a great idea. How I got so lucky as that, I don't know. The picture is not beaming, but he did beam that one time.[laughter]

Riess: That's good. ~~Oh, you have a memory of him beaming.~~  
And a good place for us to end for today.. (End Tape Six, Side A.)





g. Paul

Some things have  
changed since this  
was written

## Portraits

of

## Men

Your number 1950  
CALIFORNIA MONTHLY  
Alumni Magazine  
University of  
California

(G. PAUL BISHOP, '39)



IN 1938 a 23-year-old, red-haired, blue-eyed dental student at the University medical center in San Francisco was talking to Dr. Max Marshall, professor of bacteriology, about a common interest—photography. After a while, Dr. Marshall turned to his student and said, "Paul, at your very best, you will probably be a second-rate dentist. But I am very sure that you could be an outstanding photographer."

That student was G. Paul Bishop '39 who is today one of the nation's most distinguished and promising portrait photographers. And he admits now that his professor's remark was right.

Dr. Marshall's prediction was made despite several important facts. In the first place, when Paul graduated from Armstrong college in Berkeley in 1935, he still hadn't made up his mind as to his career. So he went to a vocational counsellor who took tests and found that Paul was good at biology and chemistry and had fine "digital dexterity." So the counsellor prescribed dentistry as Paul's best career possibility. Stranger yet, Paul was top man in Dr. Marshall's bacteriology classes.

But to overshadow both of these

factors was a part of Paul's personality that the counselor didn't count on—and Dr. Marshall did. It is Paul's intense sensitivity to people and their welfare and a driving need for some form of creative expression. Paul knew that he was dissatisfied with dentistry as a career and this feeling eventually would have kept him from becoming a great success in the profession.

Paul's photographic interests began when he was a student at San Leandro high school and was given a camera for his birthday. "In that camera I found a means of expression more satisfying than any I had ever before known," he recalls. His first "serious" picture, oddly enough, was of a smooth and lonesome egg which he made as an assignment for a camera club competition. But his photography developed rapidly and he worked his way through school taking pictures of fraternity and sorority gatherings in Berkeley.

Taking Dr. Marshall's advice to heart, Paul took a leave of absence from the dental college in 1938 and opened a garret studio in the Berkeley business district. "And I fell flat on my face," Paul said the other day. "I knew nothing about business. I should

have known that you can't be a starving artist in a garret and attract people who want glamorous pictures. You have to do that sort of thing in a plush setting."

So Paul hired out to another photographer for a year and then went to Hollywood where he learned some new tricks. When he came back, he was ready to start a new studio.

This time, his studio was located on Grand avenue in Oakland. "That started the Gold Plated Era," Paul recalled, "an era of bear rugs and pouted lower lips." Most of his Oakland customers were debutantes who wanted to become as glamorous as the Hollywood stars. And Paul knew how it was done. He had a plush studio this time, and charged prices that made his customers respect his work. Soon he had a nation-wide reputation and a prosperous future.

But there was something missing in all this luxury. Paul was still discontent. He was using all of the tricks, he had sought so eagerly to learn, but his work was not self-satisfying. And today he treats his great reputation of that era as if it were the skeleton of a horsethief in his family closet.

Before he had been able to find himself, the war came along and Paul became an ensign in the U. S. Navy. As a photo officer, he spent several months going to photography schools in the states. At Barber's Point, a naval air station in Hawaii, he was an in-





# Bishop



BISHOP'S DURANT AVENUE STUDIO ALSO SERVES AS HIS BERKELEY HOME

structor. Then he went to sea on the U.S.S. San Jacinto and participated in the second battle of the Philippines. By this time, he was a Lt. J.G. After six months, he was made Lt. and photo officer and was transferred to the carrier U.S.S. Hancock, the ship on which he finished the war with a total of 21 months overseas and seven battle stars. He is now in the organized naval reserves as a Senior Photo officer attached to a reserve aerial reconnaissance squadron at the Naval air station in Oakland.

Under fire, out on the Pacific ocean, Paul had plenty of time to think, to take stock of himself and find out why he was so dissatisfied with what he had been doing. He found help in his soul-searching from a man for whom, to this day, Paul has the greatest respect.

On the wall in Paul's Berkeley studio there is a photograph of that man. He was about 34 years old when the picture was taken — 100 miles off Tokyo aboard the U.S.S. Hancock. He wears a battle helmet and a life preserver. There are a couple of day's growth of beard on his chin, and a calm and fearless look in his eyes that

makes him appear at complete peace with the world.

"He is the first man I have ever known who had completely conquered fear," Paul said, "I have seen him—under fire—removing his battle helmet and clamping it down over the head of a gunner's mate who had lost his own."

That helmet was different from the others on the ship in that a cross

was painted on the front of it. The man was Father Doyle, a Catholic chaplain who now has a parish in New Jersey. Although Paul is not Catholic, he found a deep friendship for Father Doyle, who through many long talks out on the sea and under fire, helped Paul find himself. And pointing to the picture in his studio, Paul will say, "His is the first truly great picture I ever made—he helped me find purity."

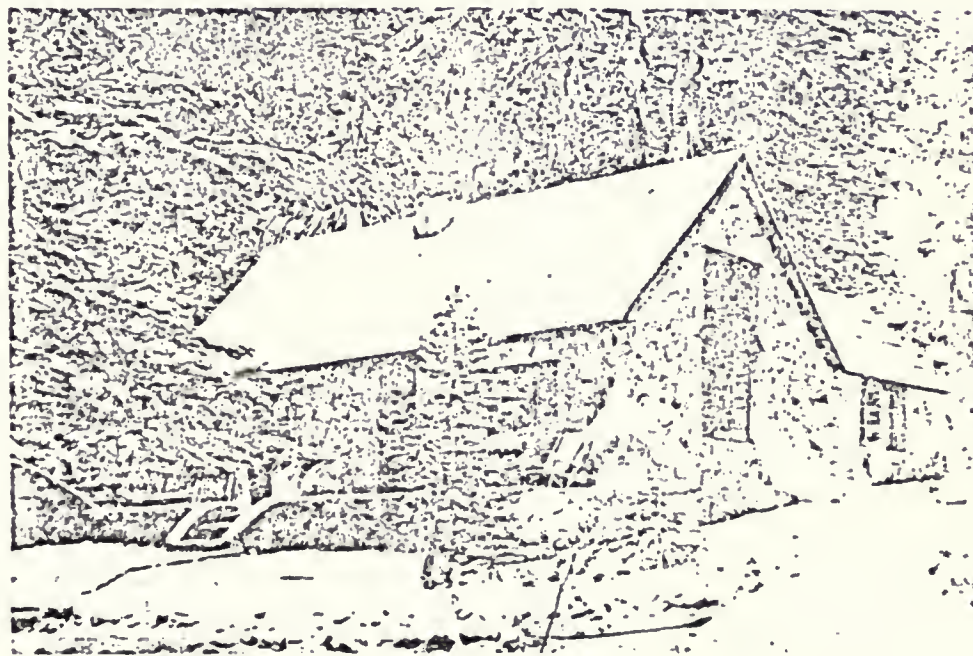
"Out there, I made a pledge to myself," Paul continues, "For the rest of my life, I was going to seek absolute truthfulness, sincerity and honesty in my fellow man. It is a real project for living; a reason for being alive."

When he returned to the United States, he threw over his plushy studio on Grand avenue, married a North Dakota farm girl who had been working in an Oakland restaurant, and opened his present studio in Berkeley.

Paul gives a great deal of credit for the success of his pictures to his wife, Lou, who, although she is not an artist herself, has excellent taste and provides the inspiration, encouragement and frank criticism that Paul requires.

And that represents quite a bit when one realizes that with his new, purist attitude toward his art, Paul was forced to smash the reputation he had previously built for himself. He turned down pictures that he would previously have considered fine opportunities. Financially, things got so bad that last year he hired out as a carpenter to provide food and maintain his studio, which also serves as a home for him, his wife, and his daughter, Paulette. "We were lucky to make two pictures a month," Paul

(Please turn to page 33)



WHEN things get too unbearable in the city, Paul takes his wife and daughter to their stake out at Lake Alpine where, single-handed, he built this 5-room mountain home.





## Alumni Club News

(Continued from page 24)

### New Orleans

Planning to listen to the Big Game together, a group of approximately 30 alumni will gather in New Orleans for the event. It will be followed by a banquet and a showing of the '49 U.C. vs. USC game movies.

The group rallied around a bonfire to rouse spirit Oct. 28.

### Portland

Movies of the Cal-Oregon State game and a talk by Alumni Executive Manager Stan McCaffrey '38 were the features of the Nov. 1 informal reception held at the Multnomah hotel in Portland.

A previous reception dinner meeting at the Multnomah brought more than 100 alumni Sept. 29 to hear Lynn Waldorf and members of his staff. Mrs. Omar Noles won the door prize of two tickets to the Cal-Washington game played Nov. 4.

Among those in attendance were Cornelis Sturges Ackley '30, F. W. Brunner '33, Tom Bryant '48, Dr. and Mrs. Brundon '24, Mr. and Mrs. William Boone '35, M. Bachelder, William Bullard, Robert Burns, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Blocklinger '26, L. L. Caldwell '14, Bob Chalmers '39, Herbert Couper '16, Laurie Dickey '39, Catherine Cobb Dickey '41, Mr. and Mrs. William Druhl '40, Dick David '39, Virginia David '43, William H. Enzie '43, John Fisher '35, M. D. Fell '16, Dr. Bob Gilbert '38, Ed Grenfell, Harold Gilbert '38, Charlotte Golten '36, John W. Granger.

Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood Hancock '24, W. J. Hynes '98, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Helm '41, C. E. Heinkel '41, Georgiana Heinkel '38, C. W. Hager '11, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Janney '17, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Lion '44, A. S. Moody '06, E. A. Moody '39, A. S. McCurdy '16, Omar Noles '38, Al McGuliers '49, Alfred L. Merrit Jr. '41, C. V. Patterson Jr. '32, Kenneth C. Ross '46, Norman Savinar '39, Mr. and Mrs. Millar ' Samuel '25, Bill Stoll '39, R. Trumbull Smith, Larry Sund '49, Robert Sund '49, Conrad Sund '49, Mrs. Isidore Winkelman '24, Tom Warhek '47, J. L. Wright '08.

### Ventura

Election of officers, a showing of the Cal-Pennsylvania game movies, and talks by Alumni Executive Manager Stan McCaffrey '38 and Field Secretary Cliff Dochterman '47 (M.A. '50) highlighted the Ventura dinner meeting Oct. 11 at the Ojai Valley Inn.

Presiding officer was O. U. Robinson '35 who turned the meeting over to the new president, Carl Phleger '12.

Stan McCaffrey passed out cards requesting questions from the floor; his answers made up the informal context of his speech which hit on such topics as athletics and the loyalty oath. Cliff Dochterman gave a humorous dissertation on "The Typical Alumni Speaker."

Among those in attendance were Dorothy Nye Baker '41, F. W. Baker '34,

George L. Baker '03, Robert L. Baker '37, Carla Henny Bard '50, Albert D. Barnes '26, Walter W. Bristol '98, Louise Hardison Browne '27, Harold T. Burket '16, Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Condit '37 and '38, Rudolph H. Drewes '26, Marie Gay Rosenberg Drewes '26, Ada Forbes Dugger '22, Woodrow Wilson Greenspan '37, Robert S. Grether '45, Sally Moffatt Grether '45, Ruth C. Hardison '20, Jack R. Helvey '33, John A. Kelly '36, Susana Burket Lamb '50, Robert B. Lamb '49, Camille Levy '99, Juliette Levy '07, John W. McDonald, Jr. '49, Jean Davis Perkins '45, Carl A. Phleger '12, Frances Holcomb Polley '26, O. U. Robinson '35, Janette Hardison Blaine '32, Barbara McGabie Sawyer '49, Brooke E. Sawyer, Jr. '46, William T. Selby '25, Robert M. Sheridan '09, Hardy M. Smith '36, Betty Wentworth '46.

### Orange County

Movies of the Cal-Pennsylvania game were narrated by Field Secretary Cliff Dochterman '47 (M.A. '50) at the Oct. 12 dinner meeting of the Orange County group at Santa Ana College.

In a brief talk Cliff satirized "The Typical Alumni Speaker." President of the Alumni Assn. Maynard Toll '27 spoke on the activities of the association, and Executive Manager Stan McCaffrey '38 talked about athletics.

### They Guard the Sky

(Continued from page 13)

James W. Dieterich '40, who was co-swain of the '39 crew, is charged with this responsibility. His three squadrons are located in Alameda, San Francisco and Sacramento.

Responsible for efficient communications phase of the unit is Capt. Robert L. O'Bryan '36, commanding officer of the 111th communications squadron.

In the critical period ahead, many of these officers and the men who serve with them will be called upon to render service in the regular air force. Some have already been called. Whatever the immediate future has in store, however, the 61st Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard, will live up to its motto—"Your Guard Is In The Sky."

### G. Paul Bishop

(Continued from page 21)

comments. But his wife has never complained. They wouldn't have it any other way.

When things got too unbearable in the city, they went to their stake out at Lake Alpine where Paul, single-handed, built a five-room mountain home out of stone.

His new attitude towards his art means a great deal to Paul. "I feel it is a great privilege to put real, honest

people in my pictures. My ambition lies in the hope that someday my pictures will have an effect on the people who see them. I hope that in them people will be able to find greater faith in their fellow men."

High hopes? Maybe. But they are worthy ones, and held so sincerely that Paul has erected many barriers to his studio—barriers intended to discourage glamour-seeking customers that would make the practical businessman shudder. The most significant barrier is the work itself which strips the subject of all that he considers himself to be and portrays only the naked truth of his character and personality. Paul never retouches a print and few people have the courage to be depicted in this manner. But actually, Paul's photographs—as evidenced by the portraits he has done for the cover of CALIFORNIA MONTHLY—demonstrate a certain nobility and greatness that "plushy" studios are unable to portray. For Paul finds nobility in all men and tries desperately to reproduce it.

The other barriers that Paul has built are less abstract. He does not advertise. His studio isn't even listed in the yellow section of the phone book. He wants to be known only by his work, and not by the claims he makes for it. He doesn't even sign his work. "When people come to me," he explains, "they want a picture of themselves to be shown to their family and friends. They don't want it cluttered up with signatures."

Most amazing of all, he specializes in portraits of men. "The average woman, I have found, wouldn't be satisfied with my work. They want flattery, not a straightforward and direct picture. And I have nothing to offer them." Despite his specialization, however, he will do portraits of women if they want them badly enough—and the final picture has the same noble charm that is found in his portraits of men.

Another characteristic of Paul's business that would make the practical salesman throw up his hands in horror is a limited choice of size for the finished portrait. Paul says that he wants to be sure that what he sees through the lens will be exactly the same picture he gives to his customer. "I haven't an enlarger in the place." So now, Paul's customers have only one choice of size—five by seven inches mounted and framed on a standard sized white mat.

Paul plans his picture before the sitting ever begins. And when his subject is once posed, Paul will rarely ask his customer to move more than a few inches.





# It all started 44 years ago with a \$1 Brownie



—I-G photo by James Pease

G. Paul Bishop has photographed some of the world's most famous personalities in arts and politics

By PATRICK KEEFE

BERKELEY — G. Paul Bishop was a 19-year-old pre-dental student at UC-Berkeley in 1935 when a friend gave him a birthday present — a "one dollar Brownie" camera.

He said he began taking pictures and found the experience was "just electric."

Today, 44 years later, Bishop is still shooting photographs. In 1946, he and his wife, Luella, opened a studio in what is still the living room of their home at 2125 Durant Ave. Since then, he has photographed some world-famous personalities in the arts and politics.

Included in that list are biologist Alfred Kinsey, psychoanalyst Theodore Reik, Admiral Chester Nimitz, Indian leader Sri Shidara Nehru, Odetta, W.H. Auden, Frank Lloyd Wright, Robert Frost, Aldous Huxley, photographer Imogen Cunningham, former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, playwright Maya Angelou, environmentalist David Brower, comedienne Phyllis Diller, playwright, Christopher Isherwood, poet Robert Lowell and San Francisco sculptor Benjamin Bufano.

Bishop said that he still feels that electricity every time he does a portrait shooting (only one per day, lasting from one to two hours) or spends all day creating the perfect print in his kitchen-darkroom.

He was born in Stockton and moved with his family to San Leandro when he was 14. He graduated from San Leandro High School and from UC-Berkeley, ~~but never went to dental school.~~

Bishop is a relaxed-looking man with a round, smiling face and thinning reddish-brown hair. He looks 10 years younger than his 64 years.

He credits a former bacteriology professor, Max Marshall, with helping him make a career decision.

"He said at best I'd be a mediocre dentist," Bishop said. "But he thought I was a very good photographer."

Just before World War II, he opened a portrait studio with a partner on Grand Avenue in Oakland near Lake Merritt. When the war began, Bishop joined the Navy, studied at the Navy photography school in Pensacola, Fla., became an officer and was assigned to an aerial reconnaissance photography

(Turn to Page 4, Col. 1)

unit  
U.S.  
crip  
ass  
the  
was  
man  
  
He  
war  
phot  
prop  
tory  
  
Bis  
has  
wood  
pens  
The  
sfa  
Ther  
rean  
selv  
prop  
ign  
and  
next  
Kada  
ama  
more  
  
Bis  
be gl  
if the  
one  
semi  
and w  
belom  
re lip  
James  
factor  
mapla  
ross p  
"Fa  
can l  
war w  
rough  
ave m  
biolog  
ly of h  
er. A  
netal  
hat sp  
eople.  
He so  
eple"  
Bis  
wtraat  
the la  
of I are  
retouc  
He pick  
notog  
Santa  
eklein  
so she



# CAPTURING THE WORLD FAMOUS ON FILM

(Continued from Page 1)

unit aboard an aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. San Jacinto. ~~That~~ She was crippled in a hurricane and he was assigned to the U.S.S. Hancock in the South Pacific, and eventually was promoted to lieutenant commander.

He served briefly with Capt. Edward Steichen, a famous American photographer, in a special photographic unit set up to record the history of the war.

Bishop's small living room-studio has brick walls, a high-beamed, wooden ceiling, and a fireplace. Dozens of his photos hang on the walls. The furnishings consist of a small sofa and table and a large hassock. There are shelves and a work counter along one wall. On the shelves is a collection of photographs, samples of his work — signed, dated, matted and sandwiched between plates of glass. Next to the photographs is an old Kodak photographic paper box, containing out-takes of some of his more widely known subjects.

Bishop took from the shelf two of the glassed portraits he shot on one of the Navy carriers during 1944. One he titled "Sad Sack" was a semi-profile of a sailor with a sad and weary expression, wearing a helmet, a cigarette dangling from his lips. The other, titled "Father James Doyle," was a full face shot of a tough-looking, determined Irish chaplain wearing a helmet with a cross painted on it.

"Father Doyle was the bravest man I ever met," Bishop said. "The war was very important to me. It brought my thinking into focus, gave me a clear idea of how to photograph people. There's a quality of humanity that comes out in war. All of us have tremendous metnal potential. I want to capture that spirit when I photograph people."

He said he tries to photograph people "just as they are."

Bishop said there are about 400 portrait studios in the Bay Area, but "(the late) Imogen Cunningham and I are the only ones who refused to retouch photographs."

He picked up a portrait of an older photographer-friend, Laura Gilpin of Santa Fe, N.M. Every crease and freckle in her face was there, the detail so sharp and true that it almost

rose off the paper.

"There, what could you take out of that picture that would make it better?" he asked.

"Why do people want retouched photographs?" he asked. "I think people are just great the way they are."

Bishop has been friends with famous West Coast photographers, including Ansel Adams and the late Edward Weston, Wynn Bullock, Ms. Cunningham, and Berkeley's Dorothea Lange.

"Weston was really my mentor," he said. "I used to sit at his feet and learn whenever I could."

His favorite subjects, he said, were Aldous Huxley, Robert Frost and Frank Lloyd Wright.

"I was a little in awe of Wright," he said. "But when he came here, he saw a photograph I'd taken of the stone house my wife and I built by hand in the Sierra after the war. He asked me about it, and was very impressed that we had built it from the ground up. Then he was easy to talk with."

"I find the older I get, though, the less awed I am by famous people."

Bishop once photographed Frost in the home of writer George Stewart in Berkeley. While Frost and Stewart talked, he said he moved around quietly shooting photos.

"Frost had a somewhat unhappy life," he said. "He really bared his soul to his friend. I was impressed."

Bishop has been a lecturer in environmental design at UC-Berkeley and teaches photography at UC Extension. He and his wife have three children living in the Bay Area. The youngest, a recent UC graduate, is also a photographer and works as a print-maker for a Berkeley photo laboratory.

Bishop said the greatest advantages of his job are that it offers personal freedom and the chance to spend an hour or two with famous and fascinating people.

He said he and his wife haven't gotten rich with their business, but they work when they want and spend summers at their Sierra house, the second one they've built by hand.

"I really don't know what I'd be doing if I weren't a photographer," he said. "I don't think I'll ever retire."

"Actually, I feel that I've been retired since I got out of the Navy."



"Darkroom Photography"  
March/April 1979

# FINE PORTRAITS FROM THE KITCHEN

G. Paul Bishop is a master portrait photographer who has lived and worked at the same location in Berkeley, California for 30 years, photographing hundreds of famous and not-so-famous people. He is also a lecturer in visual design at the University of California; his classes take place at his home in his kitchen which converts into a darkroom . . . or is it a darkroom that converts into a kitchen?

**DP:** Since your darkroom/kitchen arrangement is so unusual, especially for a pro of long standing like yourself, let's start there. Will you describe it?

**GPB:** Well, (laughing) I think the best way is to say it's a system. We live here and work here and have raised three children here in the studio. Diapers—in those days they didn't have Pampers—the wash-type diapers were hung on my film drying rack. I still use the rack but for film drying, not for diapers. Our system begins in the morning. My wife and I have breakfast in the kitchen, then the dishes are washed and put away, and out come the chemicals. I try to do my sittings mostly in the afternoon and my "darkrooming" in the morning. At lunchtime, my supplies are put out of the way and we have a simple lunch. The sink area is always kept clear. If I'm going to "darkroom" in the afternoon, the trays come back out again.

In the early days, I used to get so angry with my wife. She loved fresh papers. She would snap them and all this fine lint would land all over everything. Then it was hours worth of spotting. Now, my wife does all of the spot-

ting, although we do have pretty clean prints these days.

**DP:** No more diapers?

**GPB:** No, though our kitchen is still interesting, even tax-wise. It is over 50 percent darkroom so we treat it for tax purposes as a darkroom. We just do our cooking in the darkroom instead of doing our darkrooming in the kitchen.

**DP:** What about grease? Isn't that a problem?

**GPB:** No, I keep my equipment well covered though we do have a little grease. My old friend Sam Erlich would always say, "It's that grease that makes your prints so fine."

**DP:** How did you learn about darkroom work? Did you teach yourself, read books, or ask people?

**GPB:** My idol was Edward Weston. I spent as much time with him as I possibly could. I'd go charging down to Carmel and just get in his way, hanging around. I'm sure Weston found me very pesty.

**DP:** You just went down there? Were you introduced to him first?

**GPB:** Many people did just appear uninvited. I happened to have a mutual acquaintance whom I went with for the

first time. I was so taken with Edward and his photography that I learned more than I ever expected. If you look back through my prints, you'll find that no matter what format I used, if they were 8x10, they were 8x10 full frame; if they were 35mm, they were in the proportion of one to one-and-a-half.

**DP:** No cropping of the negative . . . ?

**GPB:** Correct. I think just now I'm beginning, after all these years, to find the freedom to stray from this rule.

**DP:** To say, well, I really would like it better cropped this way?

**GPB:** Yes.

**DP:** I gather you learned printing by picking up Edward Weston's darkroom techniques?

**GPB:** Yes. My darkroom is very complicated now compared to his. He had a pull chain with a light bulb up over the table. That was how he exposed his prints, by pulling the chain. Pretty soon, if he felt the paper was exposed enough, he'd pull the chain and turn off the light. Actually, Edward apologized to me once because there was an enlarger over in the corner which belonged to his son, Brett. Edward would have nothing to do with it.





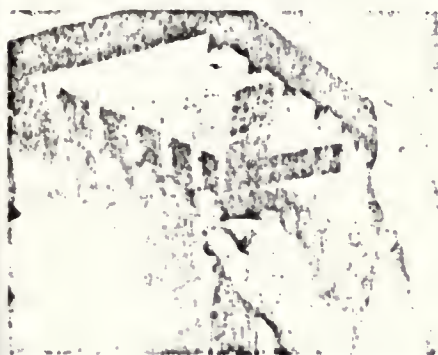


Photos by Carol Bernson

## MASTERS OF THE DARKROOM

### AN INTERVIEW WITH G. PAUL BISHOP

BY CAROL BERNSON



Newcomers to the darkroom were always carefully told that that was Brett's enlarger. Maybe Edward's darkroom forced me to realize that his work had to come out of him, not out of anything else. Pulling a chain on a light bulb was enough.

**DP:** What kind of enlarger do you use?

**GPB:** I'm on my second Durst enlarger. The M601. When I retire darkroom equipment, I move it up to our home in the mountains. My old Durst is up there. Both enlargers are 2 1/4-inch format. Here I use a color head because it's a little more diffuse for printing black-and-white. I print most of my photographs on a grade #3 paper.

**DP:** What enlarging lenses do you prefer?

**GPB:** I use Nikkors—they're sharp. My usual lens for 2 1/4-square film is a 105mm. Most photographers use an 80mm lens with that format. I have to use the 50mm lens to make a bigger enlargement than I can with my 80mm.

**DP:** Have you any darkroom methods that you think are different than the norm?

**GPB:** My contact sheets and preliminary prints—I do them rapidly on Polycontrast paper. My finished prints are on Ilfobrom graded paper, almost always grade #3. I use Dektol and run the finished prints through selenium toner.

**DP:** Have you used any of the resin-coated papers?

**GPB:** I use RC paper for glossies all of the time. It's so quick.

**DP:** I've heard you have a personal film developer formula. How about passing it on?

**GPB:** Sure. I start out with 28 ounces of water at 68°F. Add one ounce of acetone at room temperature. It raises the water temperature to 70°F. Do not use paint thinner; it must be a fine-grade acetone. I use U.S.P. (pharmaceutical grade), but it doesn't have

to be that good. Then I add sodium sulfite—you have to be careful, that's F-I-T-E—there's a sulfate and a sulfide. I use 30 grains of sodium sulfite. For those who don't want to bother with scales, that's a good rounded quarter-teaspoon—I still weigh mine out. Add 20 grains of Elon or Metol—they are both the same thing. I stir well and that's all. The important thing here to remember is agitation. During the first 30 seconds, agitation is continuous. Not a rapid shaking, but about two inversions every 5 seconds. Then it becomes critical to leave the tank alone, let it sit for 1 minute. Then give it 5 more seconds—about two or three inversions—each minute thereafter. I haven't put any alkali in this developer, so you don't need an acid shortstop. I use a plain water shortstop at 70°F. Then fix.

**DP:** What about development time?

**GPB:** The time is different for each type of film, and depends on how much contrast you want. For Panatomic-X, it's 12 to 13 minutes at 70°F, depending on contrast. Plus-X is 13 to 14, Tri-X is 15 to 16 minutes. The more development, the more contrast.

**"We just kind of do our cooking in the darkroom, instead of doing our darkroom work in the kitchen."**





# HERE'S HOW TO CREATE THE PERFECT DARKROOM



or improve an  
existing setup or  
convert to color.

## THE DARKROOM HANDBOOK

A complete guide to the  
best design, construction,  
and equipment.

By Dennis Curtin  
& Jne DeMaio

Emphasizing the practical and covering  
all possible locations, this thorough  
guide is brimming with money-saving  
ideas. It provides layout sheets and cut-  
outs for floor plans and elevations—easy  
to follow plans for counters, sinks, and  
much more.

### THE DARKROOM HANDBOOK

examines the darkrooms of 11 well-  
known photographers such as Harry  
Callahan, Aaron Siskind, George Tice,  
and Neal Slavin.

There are discussions of over 300 quality  
products and key aspects of enlarging,  
color and finishing. Hundreds of photo-  
graphs, drawings, and plans. Softcover,  
\$10.95, 181 pp., printed in 1979. Limited  
supply available.

**DARKROOM PHOTOGRAPHY  
DARKROOM HANDBOOK**  
609 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of  
**THE DARKROOM  
HANDBOOK.**

Enclosed is a check or money  
order for \$\_\_\_\_\_ plus an addi-  
tional 75¢ per book for postage  
and handling.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

California residents: please add 6% sales tax. Outside  
USA: Canada and Overseas please add \$1.75  
(shipping). Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

**DP:** Do you process all your film at  
70°F?

**GPB:** Yes, I think 70°F is easier to main-  
tain than 68. And 70°F works fine. My  
developer doesn't soften the film. If any-  
thing, it has a little tanning action, so  
you don't really have soft film at 70°F. I  
wash Panatomic-X for 6 minutes, Plus-X  
a little longer, and Tri-X for at least 15  
minutes.

**DP:** How about a washing aid? Do you  
use hypo-clearing agent?

**GPB:** I do not. I was complaining bit-  
terly about scratches on the film, and a  
friend of mine said, "Oh, you're using  
hypo eliminator, aren't you?" He was  
right. It softens the film just enough so  
that you get scratches. It isn't necessary,  
because thin-emulsion films will wash  
very rapidly. I do use Kodak's Photo-  
Flo, then I hang the film up to dry.  
There's the diaper rack right there. If I'm  
in a hurry for the film, I turn on a couple  
of burners on the stove. It isn't directly  
under the film, but it's close enough so  
that it helps. I was in the Navy, and  
when you're a sailor you learn to make  
maximum use of your space.

## "Weston apologized because there was an enlarger over in the corner which be- longed to his son Brett."

**DP:** Let's talk about your printing. You  
make the contact sheets and then —?

**GPB:** I make proof prints, all burned  
and dodged.

**DP:** What developer do you use for  
printing?

**GPB:** Dektol for everything, diluted  
1:2, with an acetic acid stop bath.

**DP:** And fix?

**GPB:** I just bought some new stuff—  
Lauder Paper Fix. You dilute it 1:7 and  
fix 4 to 8 minutes. I usually use Kodak  
fixer, but this came at a little better  
price. The only thing I vary from the  
book is that I always use fresh hypo and  
I don't use two baths, just one and throw  
it out fast. I use Permawash, and then I  
wash. I have the simplest washer in the  
world—see!

**DP:** A tray with holes in it! After you  
wash it, then what do you do—tone it?

**GPB:** Right, but first I use a little solu-  
tion of regular baking soda, about a  
teaspoon in a quart of water, just in  
case there's a bit of acid left in the print.  
If there's any acid left, you'll get yellow

stains all over. I forgot to mention one  
thing with Ilfobrom. I don't use fixer with  
an acid hardener added. The differ-  
ence is—if you take Ilfobrom processed  
in a hardened fixer out in the sunlight  
you'll see a definite purple glow, but if  
you don't put hardener in, you just get  
beautiful black.

**DP:** How do you dry your prints?

**GPB:** Like this (he pulls out aluminum-  
framed screens, stretched with cheese-  
cloth). Air dry on muslin or cheesecloth.  
Then I put them in the mounting press  
for a few seconds and they are ready to  
mount.

**DP:** Earlier you mentioned that you  
were in the Navy. Were you in a war? Did  
anything exciting happen to you?

**GPB:** Well, yes. Before WWII started I  
had switched from dental school into  
photography, and after first going  
bankrupt, I had succeeded in establish-  
ing a going portrait business. So I  
applied to be a photographic officer in  
the Navy, and was sent to Naval Pho-  
tography School. It was the only pho-  
tography school I ever went to. Mostly I  
did aerial photography: damage as-  
sessment and photographing beaches  
before invasion. But because I was  
once dumb enough to keep going when  
I should have turned back, I received a  
Presidential Citation, and as a result I  
was sent to work with Edward Steichen.  
Alas, I was only in Edward's group  
about a month before the Navy stopped  
his operations.

**DP:** What did you do while you worked  
with Steichen?

**GPB:** We were sent on special trips to  
make pictorial types of publicity pic-  
tures, instead of doing reconnaissance.  
Edward later made a book out of the  
pictures called *The Fighting Lady*.

**DP:** When the war ended, did you go  
back to what you had been doing be-  
fore?

**GPB:** I didn't have a real purpose be-  
fore the war. I wanted to be a photog-  
rapher, to take pictures, but I didn't  
have a hard-core reason. I knew I  
wanted to work with people, and the  
war was a catalyst for me. I saw people  
killed all around me, but I gained in-  
sight into human beings' courage and  
basic goodness. Some other people  
were completely devastated by the war;  
they saw only the negative side. I made  
up my mind that human beings are the  
greatest things in the world. Photog-  
raphy became a tool for me to gain  
understanding and show appreciation.  
That's all my work is about, an affirma-  
tion that "people are wonderful." ■

Carol Bernson is a California-born photojournalist  
whose work appears in national and international  
magazines as well as in corporate publications.





## g. Paul Bishop portraits in archives (other than Bingham gift)

1 of 2

George Plimpton Adams	philosophy	
David P. Barrows	political science	1952
Thomas N. Barrows	extension	
Herbert E. Bolton	history	1950
Egon Brunswick	psychology	1948
Estelle Caen	music	
John B. Condliffe	economics	
Ira B. Cross	economics	1950
Ethel H. Curtis	nursing	1956
Alva R. Davis	Dean, Letters & Sciences	
Charles Derleth, Jr.	civil engineering, irrigation	
Monroe E. Deutsch	vice president, provost	1948
Bernard A. Etcheverry	civil engineering, irrigation	
Clinton E. Evans	physical education	
Jacob C. Geiger	epidemiology	1952
Ewald T. Grether	business administration	1953
George P. Hammond	The Bancroft Library	
James D. Hart	English	1956
Roy Hensley		
Joel Hildebrand	chemistry	
Jack A. Holmes	education	
Everett D. Howe	economics	1953
Paul C. Hutchison	botanist	1953
Charles G. Hyde	sanitary engineering	
Francis A. Jenkins	physics	
Richard W. Jennings	law	
Robert J. Kerner	history	
Frank L. Kidner	economics	
Alfred L. Kroeber	anthropology	
Wendell M. Latimer	chemistry	1952
Andrew C. Lawson	geology	1950
Benjamin H. Lehman	English	1956
George Lenczowski	political science	
Leslie Lipson	political science	
S.E. Torsten Lund	education	
Olaf Lundberg	controller	
James P. McBaine	law	1953
Ben A. Madson	agronomy	1950
Alfred E Maffly	hospital administration	
Walter S. Mangold	public health	1955
Max S. Marshall (two portraits)	microbiology	
Eugen Neuhaus	art	1955
Chester W. Nimitz	regent	1950
John H. Northrop	bacteriology	1956
Chiura Obata	art	1953
Stephen C. Pepper (two portraits)	philosophy	1950



Robert A. Scalapino	political science	1953
Alex C. Sherriffs	child psychology	
Lesley Byrd Simpson	Spanish	
Herman A. Spindt	education	
Robert G. Sproul	president	1950
Roger Y. Stanier	bacteriology	
Wendell M. Stanley	biochemistry	
Hubertus J. VanMook	political science	
August Vollmer	criminology	
Clement Wiskosil		



John W. Addison, Jr.	mathematics	1969
Clinton E. Ballou	biochemistry	1971
Robert N. Bellah	sociology	1974
Woodbridge Bingham	far eastern history	1971
Clarence W. Brown	psychology	1965
Herschel Chipp	art history	1971
Fred Cousins	physical education	1948
William R. Dennes	philosophy	1948
Margaret Dhaemers	visual design	1973
Griffith C. Evans	mathematics	1970
Frank N. Freeman	education	1957
August Frugè	UC Press	1977
William Garnett	visual design	1973
Ewald T. Grether	economics	1949
James W. Guthrie	education	1975
Brutus Hamilton	track coach	1947
George T. Hammond	The Bancroft Library	1968
Leon Henkin	mathematics	1967
John D. Hicks	history	1968
Charles J. Hitch	president	1967
Andrew W. Imbrie	music	1958
Hans Jenny	soil chemistry	1967
Harold E. Jones	psychology	1958
Mary C. Jones	education	1969
John L. Kelley	mathematics	1964
Hans Kelsen	political science	1958
Alfred L. Kroeber	anthropology	1951
Lewis Lancaster	oriental languages	1974
Waclaw Lednicki	slavic languages	1967
Philip R. Lee	UC Medical Center	1969
Derrick Lehmar	mathematics	1964
T.R. McConnell	higher education	1967
C.O. McCorkle, Jr.	vice president	1972
D.W. MacKinnon	Institute for Personality Assessment	1972
David E. Mandelbaum	anthropology	1960
Czeslow Milosz	slavic languages	1976
Maurice Moonitz	business administration	1974
Charles B. Morrey	mathematics	1964
Jerzy Neyman	mathematics	1959
Chiura Obata	art	1951
William Prosser	law	1951
Murry H. Protter	mathematics	1968
Roy Radner	economics	1974
Leon Richardson	Latin	1947
Edwin Rosinski	UC Medical Center	1969
Robert Ruddell	education	1976



Francis Sooy	UC Medical Center	1973
Milton Stern	extension	1972
Sidney Suslow	institutional research	1976
Paul S. Taylor	economics	1977
Katherine Towle	dean of students	1950
Joe Tussman	philosophy	1968
Ernest Tuveson	English	1969







photo by G. Paul Bishop Jr.

G. Paul Bishop is a master portrait photographer who has lived and worked in Berkeley, California for 35 years. He also teaches at University of California Extension. His classes are held in his home darkroom, which converts into a kitchen at mealtime. The studio where portrait sittings take place is also his living room. With these modest facilities, a devotion to technical excellence and a sensitivity to people Bishop has created a large body of highly praised portraits. He has photographed over 3000 people, many of whom are distinguished in Science, Politics or the Arts.

Bishop began photographing in 1935 with a "one dollar Brownie". The experience was "just electric," says Bishop, and he began to photograph constantly. Bishop was largely self-taught, although Edward Weston was an early mentor — "I'd go charging down to Carmel and hang around. I'm sure he found me very pretty," says Bishop. In 1938 on the advice of a professor, Dr. Max Marshall, Bishop dropped out of dental school and opened a photographic studio in a garret in Berkeley. The studio folded and Bishop was prompted to change his business tactics. He learned Hollywood "glamor" photography and opened a plush studio in Oakland. "It was an era of bear rugs and pouched lower lips," he recalls. The venture was a tremendous economic and critical success but Bishop felt personally discontented with his work.

Subsequent events in World War II were to define not only Bishop's photographic direction but his philosophy of life as well. As a photographic officer in the U.S. Navy, Bishop attended photo school, did

aerial reconnaissance photography and received a Presidential Citation, as a result of which he was sent to work with Edward Steichen in a unit recording the history of the war. Bishop began photographing the men around him, including Father James Doyle, a courageous Navy chaplain with whom he became lifelong friends. "Father Doyle was the bravest man I ever met — his is the first truly great picture I ever made. The war brought my thinking into focus, gave me a clear idea of how to photograph people. There's a quality of humanity that comes out in war. I want to capture that spirit when I photograph people."

When Bishop returned to the United States, he opened a new studio with the assistance of his bride, Luella. Bishop gives a great deal of credit for the success of his photographs to Luella Bishop — "She has excellent taste and provides the inspiration, encouragement and frank criticism that I require." Because he insisted on photographing people "just as they are" and refused to retouch photos, Bishop sometimes was forced to do non-photographic work and make financial sacrifices. However, this insistence on maintaining his own aesthetic and philosophical standards as a sought after photographer, Bishop feels that fulfilling work, personal freedom and adequate financial success for himself and his family (he and Luella reared three children, one of whom is a photographer), says Bishop, "I really don't know what I'd be doing if I weren't a photographer. I don't think I'll ever ratia."

# U.C. PORTRAITS

by

## G. PAUL BISHOP

AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS  
PORTRAYING

112 MEN AND WOMEN OF DISTINCTION  
WHO HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY  
FROM 1947 UNTIL 1981.

APRIL 6 - MAY 2, 1981

HELLER GALLERY

ASUC Student Union Bldg., (main floor)

U.C. Berkeley

M-F 8 am - 10 pm Sa 10 am - 6 pm

sponsored by The ASUC Studio and SUPERB productions





- Dean Acheson  
U.S. Secretary of State  
1963
- Professor George P. Adams  
Philosophy  
1960
- Maya Angelou  
Author - Actress  
1963
- Brother Antoninus  
Poet  
1965
- W. H. Auden  
Poet  
1964
- General David Prescott Barrows  
President of the University of California  
1960
- Alan Barth  
Editorial Writer for the Washington Post  
1969
- Professor Robert N. Bellah  
Sociology  
1974
- Professor Emeritus Woodbridge Bingham  
History  
Director of Asiatic Studies  
1972
- Peter Blas  
Portrait Painter  
1961
- Louise Bogan  
Poet  
1965
- Dr. Samuel Bouma  
Research Mathematician  
1978
- Chester Bowles  
Ambassador to India  
1956
- David Brower  
President, Friends of the Earth  
1978
- Benjamin Benvenuto Bufano  
Sculptor  
1964
- Herb Caen  
Columnist, *San Francisco Chronicle*  
1964
- Professor Shing Shan Chern  
Mathematics  
Recipient of the National Medal of Science  
1980
- Professor Herschel Chipp  
Art History  
1971
- Professor Emeritus Robert A. Cockrell  
Forestry  
1981
- Dr. Arthur Holly Compton  
Physicist, Nobel Prize Laureate  
1962
- James B. Conant  
Ambassador to Germany  
1966
- Malcom Cowley  
Author  
1962
- Imogen Cunningham  
Photographer  
1962
- Sir Charles Darwin  
Physicist  
1966
- Professor Gerard Debreu  
Economics and Mathematics  
Member of U.S. National Academy of Sciences  
1961
- Dr. J. B. de la Faille  
Authority on Vincent van Gogh  
1964
- Professor Charles Derfeth Jr.  
Civil Engineering  
1960
- Vice President Monroe E. Deutsch  
Provost, Vice President of University of California  
1948
- Phyllis Diller  
Comedienne  
1955
- Richard Eberhart  
Poet  
1964
- Barbara Eliaszer  
Photographer  
1975
- Sam Ehrlich  
Photographer  
1962
- Professor Bernard A. Etcherverry  
Civil Engineering  
1960
- Clinton W. Evans  
Physical Education  
1947
- Georgann S. Evans  
Sculptor  
1972
- Gwynfor Evans, M.P.  
House of Commons, Great Britain  
1978
- Robert Frost  
Poet  
1966
- August Frgu  
Director Emeritus, U.C. Press  
1971
- Oliver Gaslini  
Photographer  
1977
- Dr. George Gamow  
Cosmologist, University of Leningrad  
1955
- Jean Garrigue  
Poet  
1966
- Dr. J.C. Galger  
Prof. of Public Health  
1955
- Laura Gilpin  
Photographer  
1978
- Charlotte Gustafson  
Physicist  
1980
- Professor Emeritus James D. Hart  
English  
Director, Bancroft Library  
1966
- Professor Joel H. Hildebrand  
Chemistry  
1960
- President Charles J. Hitch  
President of the University of California  
1967
- Dhwa Huiukhtu  
Grand Lama, Living Buddha  
1957
- Aldous Huxley  
Author  
1960
- Sir Julian Huxley  
Biologist  
1964
- Professor Andrew W. Imbrie  
Composer  
1967
- Im Kun Oh  
Minister of Finance, Korea  
1968
- Christopher Isherwood  
Author  
1962
- Ishrael  
Dancer  
1960
- Randall Jarrell  
Poet  
1966
- Padma Bahadur Kaphari  
Ambassador from Nepal  
1978
- Vice President James B. Kendrick Jr.  
Dean of the College of Agriculture  
1978
- Professor Robert J. Kerner  
History  
1960
- Professor Leopold Kohr  
Economics, Wales  
1961
- Professor Frank Kiefer  
Economics  
1960
- Geloway Kinnell  
Poet  
1966
- Dr. Alfred Kinsey  
Biologist  
1964
- Ralph Kirkpatrick  
Musician  
1965
- Theodora Kroeber-Quinn  
Author  
Regent, University of California  
1970
- Professor Wendell M. Latimer  
Chemistry  
1960
- Professor Andrew C. Lawson  
Anthropology and Geology  
1960
- Professor Benjamin H. Lehman  
English  
1960
- Robert Lowell  
Poet  
1967
- Professor James P. McBaine  
Law  
1960
- Professor David G. Mandelbaum  
Anthropology  
1978
- Professor Max S. Marshall  
Microbiology  
1960
- Sir Peter B. Medawar, F.R.S.  
Director, National Institute for Medical Research, London  
Nobel Prize Laureate  
1967
- Professor Caslaw Milosz  
Slavic and Latin Languages  
Nobel Prize Laureate, Literature  
1978
- Darius Milhaud  
Composer  
1965
- Sergio Mondragon  
Poet  
1966
- Gunter Myrdal  
Sociologist  
Executive Secretary, United Nations  
Economics Commission for Europe  
1963
- Shri Sudhara Netru  
Indian Leader  
1964
- Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz  
United States Navy  
1952
- Chinus Obata  
Painter  
1961
- Connor Cruise O'Brien, M.P.  
Author  
1971
- Frank O'Connor  
Author  
1966
- Odette  
Singer  
1966
- Rei Partridge  
Etcher  
1962
- Professor Stephen C. Pepper  
Philosophy  
1960
- Margaret Randall  
Poet  
1966
- James Reston  
Washington Correspondent,  
New York Times  
1968
- Dr. Theodor Reik  
Psychoanalyst  
1964
- Professor Emeritus Leon Richardson  
Latin  
Director Emeritus, University  
Extension  
1947
- Amette Rosenhine  
Sculptor  
1963
- Professor Robert A. Scalapino  
Political Science  
1960
- Professor Glenn T. Seaborg  
Nuclear Chemistry  
Director of Atomic Energy  
Commission  
Nobel Prize Laureate  
1960
- Professor Emilio Gino Segre  
Particle Physics  
Nobel Prize Laureate  
1960
- Karl Shapiro  
Poet  
Pulitzer Prize  
1965
- Margaret Shedd  
Author  
1967
- Dr. Milton Silverman  
School of Medicine  
Science Editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*  
1974
- Professor Ledy B. Simpson  
Spanish and Portuguese  
Dean of College, Letters and Sciences  
1960
- Dr. Francis Spoo  
Chancellor  
U.C. Medical School  
1973
- Stephen Spender  
Poet  
1966
- Norman A. Spindt  
Director of Admissions  
1948
- Jane Stein  
Missionary  
1969
- President Robert Gordon Sproul  
University of California  
1960
- Allen Tate  
Poet  
1965
- Professor Emeritus Paul Taylor  
Economics  
1977
- Katherine Towle  
Dean of Students  
1967
- Professor Charles H. Townes  
Nobel Prize Laureate, Physics  
1961
- August Vollmer  
Criminology  
1962
- Margaret Webster  
Director of Shakspearean Drama  
London  
1964
- Edward Weston  
Photographer  
1962
- Richard Wilbur  
Poet  
1966
- William Carlos Williams  
Poet  
1965
- Professor Clement Wiskosil  
Engineering  
1960
- Cedric Wright  
Photographer  
1962
- Frank Lloyd Wright  
Architect  
1957

All dates refer to when the  
PORTRAIT was taken.





By LISA HARRINGTON

**T**he place is packed with people. Pressed against a wall, Odette sings in rapture. An arm's length away at Imogen Cunningham, her eyes flickering with mischief, and Robert Frost. Across from them, Ansel Adams surveys the room's rustic brick and timber interior while, in a less-crowded corner, a cadaverous Aldous Huxley talks about his latest book. But the colloquy of Huxley is imagined here, not heard. And the eyes lining the room stay open all day and all night. This is the Durant Avenue studio of Berkeley master photographer G. Paul Bishop '39, whose portraits of Cunningham and hundreds of others seem to breathe.

"My people are real," says the easy-going Bishop, who relaxes on the far end of the studio's couch, away from the light of an overhead lamp. His work is never re-touched. It comes complete with the freckles, dimples, and wrinkles that are there in person. "When I do a portrait of someone, I'm less concerned with their anatomy than I am with their spirit," explains Bishop. "If I removed any line from Imogen's face, I would kill the life of the picture."

When Bishop first set up shop as a portraitist, on Oakland's Grand Avenue, he specialized in another kind of picture—a glamour shot. He employed dramatic lighting and exotic backgrounds and spent hundreds of rolls of film on "pouty lips and bear rugs." He even went to Hollywood to improve his techniques by studying the photographers who transformed actors and actresses there into gods and goddesses. He learned how to direct light to shorten or lengthen a nose or soften a jutting jawline. He made "pretty pictures," which were what the local debutantes and aspiring actresses wanted. He also made a reputation and a substantial living. But something was missing. Before he could identify it himself, World War II stepped in and did it for him.

Bishop abandoned the startles for an ensign's uniform. The Navy sent him first to photography schools in the States and then to Barber's Point, a naval air station in Hawaii, to teach what he'd learned. He went on to do aerial reconnaissance photography, cover the second battle of the Philippines, receive a Presidential Citation—and then was sent to work with Edward Steichen in a special photographic unit. A promotion to the rank of lieutenant sent him to sea on the *U.S.S. Hancock*, 100 miles off the coast of Japan.

Bishop spent 21 months on the Pacific during the war. He recorded battles in the sky and on deck and also took what he calls "the first truly great picture I ever made." It is a portrait of the Navy chaplain

(Continued on page 18)



Father James Doyle

Chaplain aboard the *U.S.S. Hancock*

1944

My photo station on the *U.S.S. Hancock* was where the running water was located, so it also became an emergency hospital. Father Doyle spent a great deal of time there, providing support for the wounded men—and sometimes delivering them their last rites. He had the qualities I was seeking for my work. I wanted to show on film the extraordinary potential of the human mind. Many times, Father Doyle sacrificed his own safety to protect someone else. I once told him that he should be more careful, but he said, "If my Father wants me elsewhere, there's no point in trying to delay it."

# An eye for an I

Portraits by G. Paul Bishop

Portrait of the Artist: G. Paul Bishop in his Durant studio-home. Above, and on the next two pages, Bishop recalls and describes some of his favorite portraits.









**Benjamin Benvenuto**

**Bufano**

**Sculptor**

**1954**

I have always felt that a portrait should be an accurate biography of a person. I had not met Ben Bufano before I photographed him, but I had admired him and his work from a distance. He was just over five feet tall, but as you can see he was a very muscular man. He took pride in that. Most of his statues were enormous things, as tall as the roof of our building. I always thought that was some sort of compensation for his small stature. He was a very opinionated man, not at all wishy-washy. But he also had a sense of humor. I think you feel these things about him when you look at his portrait.



**Aldous Huxley**

**Author**

**1960**

Aldous Huxley was here for an endowed chair when this was taken. The powers that be on campus were very worried about his health, because he just wasn't eating. His beautiful hands are just skin and bones, and his clothes could hold another person. He had slipped into an intellectual trance and was fading away. He wasn't even bothering with his laundry. So the University paid a student to live with him and take care of him. I was ecstatic about having the opportunity to do his portrait. During the sitting he began talking about a book he had just finished, the 180 degrees counterpart of *Brave New World*. We spent a wonderful afternoon talking about what a Utopian culture would really be like, and he said that the only thing he had left to do was to choose a title for the book. The tragedy is that his house in Westwood later burned, and the only copies of his completed manuscript were destroyed. He had to be physically restrained from trying to rescue them.

**Mrs. Anson Blake**

**1947**

This is one of my early portraits, but I think it holds its interest. The Blake family donated the estate where the president of the University lives. They were an extremely generous family. In portraiture it's important to keep your interpretations of people to a minimum. You've got to butt out and let these people express themselves. Otherwise you will never get a face as pure and touching as Mrs. Anson Blake's. You can see the purity of that woman's life in this picture. It's all there, it's all up front about her.



**Frank Lloyd Wright**

**Architect**

**1957**

Frank Lloyd Wright and Imogen Cunningham had at least one thing in common. They pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, so to speak. They both believed that the only way they were going to make it in this world was to believe in their own propaganda—to firmly believe that they were the best and to keep reaffirming their own worth until finally it became an irresistible force. It would be very apt to have at least some of Wright's drawings, something that would identify him as an architect, in the background. I don't want the background to distract from the essence of the person. I am more concerned with the feeling that might come from his hands. As an architect, his hands are important. I think his face conveys the wise old owl spirit of the man.



**Andrew C. Lawson**

**Professor, Anthropology and Geology**

**1950**

This picture looks just as alive today as it did when it was first taken. Why? Well, I think it must be the aura of the person that keeps this picture alive. Old Andy was a story in himself. As a model, he was great. He was about 6'6". I had to fold him up in a chair so that he could fit into the picture. I was especially conscious of his piercing eyes. In his day, Andy was a prime mover on campus. He also managed to make life miserable for President Sproul's secretary and several of the campus telephone operators. Andy considered Sproul as one of his students and junior to him. Anytime anything went wrong anywhere on campus, Andy would call Sproul's office to report it. Now Sproul had a big booming voice, but so did Andy. And Andy was sharp-tongued as well. What's interesting here is the scared beetle. It was presented to him by the Egyptian government after he helped open up Tutankhamen's tomb. Beck then there was a story going around that everyone who went into the tomb would meet some horrible fate and die. Well, Andy, who was a very virile and somewhat ferocious man, acted very defiant about it—and he did live a long time.







**Paul Taylor**  
Professor Emeritus, Economics  
1977

I took a series of pictures of Paul throughout his house. This is the room that he called his and Dorothea's workroom. Now Dorothea Lange has been dead a long time, but when we reached the threshold of that room, Paul said, "Don't you just feel Dorothea here?" It's almost impossible to be sure what he meant. I think he was referring to a spiritual presence, but on the other hand, the room is absolutely full of memorabilia of Dorothea. Her photographs dominate the walls, and there are artifacts she and Paul collected from around the world. So he could very well have meant something else. It was very definitely his favorite room in the house, his favorite place to be. I chose to do his portrait in this way, because I think, in this case, you get a better biographical sketch of the man.

**Monroe E. Deutsch**  
Provost, Vice President of UC  
1948

This was taken in his home, near Lake Merritt. The book is one he wrote about the Queen of the Netherlands. He had just received it from the publisher on the day of the sitting. Monroe Deutsch was a very kind and very sensitive person. This portrait was done with a little bit of conniving on my part. Deutsch had what in dentistry they call an inferior chin. It receded and gave him a rather misleading appearance. They used to say if somebody had a weak chin, they had a weak character. As fine and kind a gentleman as Deutsch was, he certainly was not a weak one. I knew he had these inordinately hairy hands. Yet look at the delicate taper of his fingers. I used that masculine, and beautiful, hand to hide his chin, and I think it worked very well. Constructing a picture this way is a very dangerous thing to do. Once in awhile you get by with it, but more often than not it looks affected.



**Dikawa Hutukhtu**  
Grand Lama, Living Buddha, Tibet  
1957

His was an extremely interesting face, one that has held up beautifully through the years. The most extraordinary thing about this portrait is how it was done. Usually my tool for getting people to relax and respond to the camera is to talk to them. I just keep talking. But the Living Buddha, who was here in Berkeley to help produce a Tibetan-English dictionary, didn't speak English. I didn't speak Tibetan, and there was no third party. He arrived for the sitting in his native costume, and he carried a staff. Since there wasn't any translator, we just smiled at each other.



**Robert Frost**  
Poet  
1958

A critic once said I made Frost look like an old farmer. Well, so much for critics. To look like some sort of New England farmer would have tickled Frost to no end! I don't always include hands in a portrait, but Frost's were so rustic. He had a beautiful little rotund belly, like a Santa Claus. And that snow-white hair. I took a close-up during this sitting, but over the years it has not weathered as well as this one. As a rule I insist upon a one-to-one relationship, but this was done in George Stewart's home. He and Frost were great friends. Frost lived a very sad and sorrowful life. There was a great deal of internal tragedy, and that's what he and Stewart were talking about. It was a very personal conversation. They knew I was there, but I was like a mouse in the corner.



**Imogen Cunningham**  
Photographer  
1962

I guess I first met Imogen around 1940. Hers was one of the friendships I treasured most. Feisty as she was, she was very lovable. This was taken on her better behavior. I have a stack of others where her mouth is open and she looks fierce. She was very temperamental and had this habit of intimidating people, particularly students, to get them to work as hard as she did. I think Imogen is yet to be recognized for the great portraitist she was. She's often remembered for a beautiful body of work on liars, but her real rapport was with people. The wristwatch here is of great significance. It was willed to her by Edward Weston, who died in what we would in these days call abject poverty. It was just a crime considering what his pictures sell for today. He and Imogen always had a certain amount of playful bickering going back and forth, but they were great friends. She was so proud of the watch, and I wanted to somehow get it into the picture.





Mountain magic: "When spring arrives, I go to the mountains to be rejuvenated," says G. Paul Bishop. The three photographs on this page—a "holiday" from Bishop's work in portraiture—were taken near his vacation home in Lake Alpine.



(Continued from page 15)

on board, a 34-year-old Catholic priest from New Jersey named Father Doyle. It shows a man wearing a helmet, life preserver, the beginnings of a beard, and an unmistakable look of courage. Like many of Bishop's portraits, a feeling of serenity radiates from it. "Father Doyle is the first man I had ever known who had completely conquered fear," says Bishop. "I saw him—under fire—remove his battle helmet and clamp it down over the head of a gunner's mate who had lost his own." No doubt the mate felt more secure under Doyle's helmet; it had a cross painted on its front.

Somewhere out on the ocean, Bishop says, he underwent a metamorphosis. "There was some moment aboard ship when I said, 'For the rest of my life, I will use my camera to seek the absolute sincerity in my fellow man.'" It became clear that he could no longer devote time to producing artificial pictures. "I made a pledge that, come hell or high water, I would keep my integrity." Hell and high water came, and Bishop's integrity survived.

The first thing he did when he returned to Oakland was to close his old studio. Then he married a North Dakota farm girl, Luella. The third thing he did was to move to Berkeley and start over again as a portrait photographer. His new approach, however, cost the young Bishop family a few dollars in the beginning. Many people were reluctant to be revealed on film as they were in the flesh. So, to help make ends meet, Bishop left Luella at home to manage the phones and set up appointments while he hired himself out as a carpenter. (To this day, Luella manages the business end of Bishop's work, and he

credits her with providing immeasurable support and frank criticism.) The experience paid off later on when the Bishops acquired property for a vacation home on Lake Alpine in the Sierra. They had long dreamed of having a home in the mountains, but the chance to buy a valuable piece of land came when their funds were low. They bought the land, and Bishop built the home himself, using whatever stones and timber he could find on the lot. Some years and three children later, he built a larger home in the mountains, once again from scratch. Building a home, says Bishop, is akin to taking a picture. "You must visualize what you want before you begin."

Except for a modest listing in the yellow pages, Bishop does not advertise. Instead he relies on word-of-mouth referrals. For the past 36 years, referrals have ushered more than 3,000 people into Bishop's studio, which doubles as the family's living room. G. Paul Jr., who earned his degree in fine art from Hayward and is skilled with a camera too, often shares his father's work

space.

Bishop has a "mental list" of people he hopes to capture on film. He doesn't call them, though; he waits for them to come by, and sooner or later they do. The University has been a large source of photo subjects. After UC Press commissioned Bishop to do a portrait of anthropologist Theodora Kroeber for one of her books, Theodora called Bishop to do portraits of her and her husband, Alfred Kroeber, throughout their Maybeck home. During a portrait session with Glenn Seaborg, Bishop mentioned that he'd like to do a series on the University's Nobel Prize winners. The next day Bishop received phone call after phone call from Seaborg's colleagues, calling to make an appointment.

Although his subjects are not always celebrities, quite often they are. His camera has focused on a veritable potpourri of the well-known—from poet W. H. Auden to comedienne Phyllis Diller. Eventually, Bishop hopes to put his portraits into a book. At the moment, the University's Regional Oral History Office is taping his oral history.

Bishop teaches photography through University Extension. Not long ago, he took a class to the Sierra to focus their cameras on the outdoors. Over the years, he has used his own lens on mushrooms and wildflowers. He calls his mountain landscapes "an exercise." While portraits dominate his studio, the nature studies are used in slide shows for people confined to hospitals and nursing homes.

Bishop's interest in photography began when he was well on his way to another career: dentistry. One of his classmates in Cal's dental school bought him a camera, and "it was love at first sight." One of his professors spotted his restlessness with dentistry and suggested that a career in photography might suit him better. "I think I rebelled against dentistry because it gave me a feeling of claustrophobia," Bishop says now. "Even wide open, the oral cavity is pretty small."

Bishop gradually upgraded his cameras (the first was "a dollar Brownie") and then found his way to Big Sur, Ansel Adams, and Edward Weston. Along with Imogen Cunningham and Dorothea Lange, they became his mentors and friends. "I guess I'd have to say I believe in miracles," remarks Bishop. "Photography's been good to me. Who would have ever thought I'd spend an afternoon someday with Robert Frost and George Stewart? Yet it happened."

"It's as conny as Aladdin's lamp, but I would shout it from the rooftop if I could: 'If you really believe in something, do it. If you really believe, you'll survive.'"

















